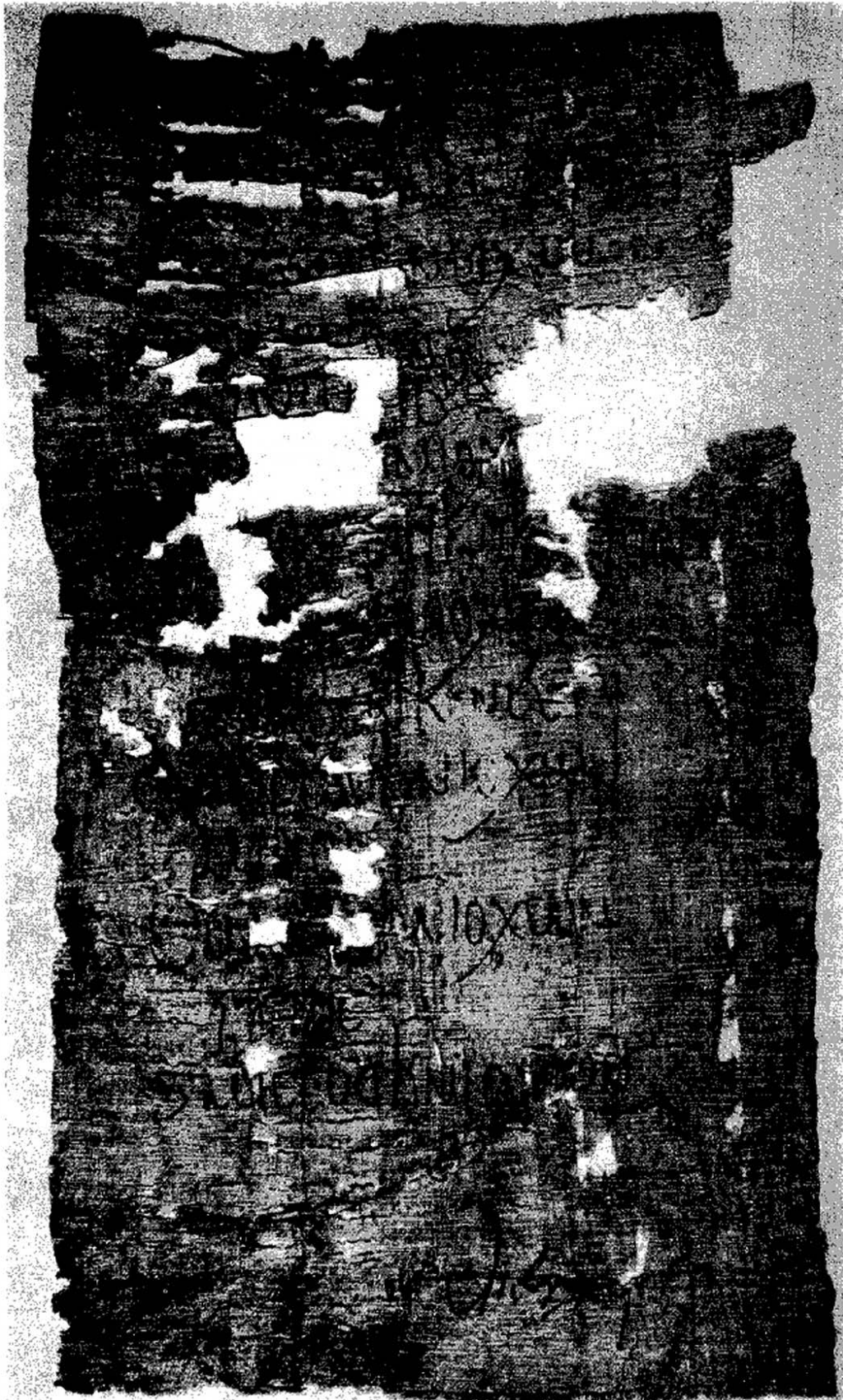


CIRCUS FACTIONS

BLUES AND GREENS AT
ROME AND BYZANTIUM

ALAN CAMERON

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AND BYZANTIUM**



Circus Programme, sixth c. A.D. (Ox. Pap. 2707)

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Blues and Greens at
Rome and Byzantium

BY

ALAN CAMERON

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Preface

THE genesis of this book has been described in the preface to its predecessor and companion volume *Porphyrius the Charioteer* (Clarendon Press, 1973).

Despite an abundant scholarly literature, the 'factions' of the Roman and Byzantine circus remain an astonishingly underresearched subject. Three quarters of a century ago one or two scholars essayed an interpretation in social, religious and political rather than sporting terms. Instead of stimulating further detailed research in confirmation or refutation, these paradoxical speculations immediately won the status of unquestioned orthodoxy, attracting little but embroidery in subsequent scholarship. The only problems discussed were those created by these false premises. The most obvious and important aspects of the subject have never been studied at all. Much relevant evidence pointing in other directions has been simply ignored. The ultimate product of this tradition is the 600 pages of J. Jarry's *Hérésies et factions* (1968), a book whose spectacular marriage of traditional falsehood with original fantasy has put it beyond the reach of ordinary criticism. Much of the first part of this book is devoted to a criticism of the basic assumptions of this school; but those familiar with its literature will observe that I have silently ignored most of the wilder flights of my predecessors.

In the second part I substitute a more constructive and realistic account of my own; many may prefer to begin with the positive rather than the negative. It was time to make a completely fresh start, to collect all the evidence and set it in a proper perspective. If the factions that emerge lack the glamour of the freedom fighters of tradition, they are no less remarkable in their different way (Chapter XII provides a summary of my thesis)—and are at least firmly rooted in the evidence. If the traditional view is ever to be reformulated, it is likewise evidence, not dogma, that will have to be cited.

More space than might have been expected is given over to

questions of terminology (not always easy reading, but inescapably relevant) and to another underresearched topic, the history of popular entertainment in the Roman world. As to my own terminology, while drawing the line at the bogus 'demes' I could not bring myself to abandon 'faction', incorrect though it is. Chapters II and VI are revised versions of articles originally published in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* and *Byzantion* respectively, and my Inaugural Lecture *Bread and Circuses* was adapted from an earlier version of Chapter VII.

Many friends and colleagues have given me the benefit of their advice or generously allowed me to make use of unpublished archaeological material, inscriptions, or papyri: to Timothy Barnes, Zbigniew Borkowski, Sebastian Brock, Geoffrey de Ste Croix, Peter Hermann, Nicholas Horsfall, John Humphrey, Christopher Jones, Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, Fergus Millar, Luigi Moretti, Oswyn Murray, John Rea, Charlotte Roueché, Ian Taylor, David Thomas, and Edward Ullendorff I am variously indebted. Susan French and Gilla Harris coped uncomplainingly with a patched and polychrome manuscript, and the University Press showed their usual skill and patience. John Martindale read the proofs with characteristic vigilance. The argument and presentation of the whole book owes most of such lucidity as it possesses to the vigilant criticism and unfailing judgement of Averil Cameron, who also removed most of its adverbs.

*King's College London,
April 1975*

A. C.

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Abbreviations

I HAVE in general followed the same practice as in *Porphyrius the Charioteer* (see p. xi). 'Bonn' refers to the Bonn Corpus of Byzantine texts. References to Theophanes are normally by page and line of de Boor's edition, but occasionally I give as well or instead Theophanes' own *anno mundi* (A.M.) dates. Fragments of Malalas and John of Antioch are quoted from de Boor's *Excerpta de Insidiis* (*Exc. Hist. Const. Porph.* iii, 1905). For the sake of consistency I have capitalized the names of the four circus colours throughout, in quotations from writers ancient and modern (whatever their own practice) no less than in my own text.

<i>ACO</i>	<i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i> , ed. E. Schwartz, Berlin 1914f.
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>BARB</i>	<i>Académie royale de Belgique, Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques</i>
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut française d'archéologie orientale du Caire</i>
<i>BM</i>	<i>Byzantina-metabyzantina</i>
<i>BS</i>	<i>Byzantino-slavica</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Classical Review</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>I. Didyma</i>	T. Weigand, <i>Didyma</i> ii: <i>Die Inschriften</i> , ed. A. Rehm and R. Harder (1958)
<i>I.G.C.As.Min.</i>	<i>Recueil d'inscriptions grecques chrétiennes d'Asie Mineure</i> , ed. H. Grégoire (1913)
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , ed. H. Dessau

<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>MEFR</i>	<i>Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École Française de Rome</i>
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
<i>REG</i>	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>

PART I

Introduction

THIS book seeks to trace the history and significance of what are generally (if incorrectly) known as the 'circus factions' of the Roman Empire. It follows their remarkable story from the principate of Augustus to the eve of the crusades. It thus covers more than 1200 years, though naturally attention is focused on what is generally considered the heyday of the factions in the late Roman/early Byzantine period, that is to say from the fifth to the seventh centuries. Yet this period cannot be understood aright without a careful study of what came before and after.

Those who have concerned themselves with the early Byzantine factions have always in the past been Byzantinists, little acquainted with the early Empire. Those who have studied the factions of the early Empire have been classical scholars, content to take on trust the results of their Byzantine colleagues. In consequence it has come to be agreed by both parties that there is a radical difference between the factions of the early and late Empire. This is not in itself particularly important. What is important is the assumption that this change in the character of the factions represented something much deeper and more significant. They turn into political parties, spokesmen of the people—indeed they *are* the people, a sovereign people, able to make and unmake Emperors, and enjoying a variety of lesser powers and privileges.

The fullest and most influential account of this alleged transformation is G. Manojlović's study 'Carigradski Narod' of 1904, first made generally available in H. Grégoire's French translation of 1936. Few of the individual points in Manojlović's thesis were in fact original: his service was rather to have developed these points to their logical conclusions and to have welded them together into a comprehensive picture.

This picture, which for convenience of reference I shall often

style the 'traditional view', is in my judgement mistaken or at least misstated in every material respect.

The more important of these alleged differences between the factions of the early and later Empire may be summarized as follows:

(A) From the fifth century on the factions of Constantinople are usually denoted by the term *δημοι*. These 'demes' were, as in Attica, residential areas. Thus the entire population of Constantinople was divided between the factions, which must therefore (so it is argued) be more than 'mere' sporting associations.

(B) They were constituted from probably as early as the fourth century as an 'urban militia'. It was in this capacity that in later days they alternately saved and betrayed the city.

(C) The two main parties, the Blues and the Greens, were the standard-bearers of orthodoxy and monophysitism respectively in the religious controversies of the age.

(D) Instead of the four sporting associations of the principate (Red, White, Green, Blue) there emerged just two, the Greens and Blues. This polarization reflects the natural social, economic, political, and religious cleavages of the population as a whole rather than anything so frivolous as their sporting preferences.

(E) A social division between the Blues and the Greens is clearly discernible. The Blues represent the upper, the Greens the lower classes.

(F) Most important of all it was not till the late Empire that the factions came to play a political role.

I shall be arguing that (A), (B), and (C) are simply false: there were no demes (Ch. II) and no regular urban militia (Ch. V); and the factions played no detectable part in doctrinal disputes (Ch. VI). (D), (E), and (F) illustrate the Byzantinist's unfamiliarity with conditions under the early Empire: (D), the greater importance of the Blues and Greens, and to a lesser extent (E), the social distinction between them, obtained already in the first century (Chs. III-IV), though it is more than doubtful whether either factor had any political significance. As for (F), while the factions as such took no traceable part in politics under the early Empire, we shall see in part II that the

circuses and in particular theatres of both Rome and great eastern metropolises like Antioch had served as political arenas since the Republic.

Unquestionably changes did take place between the age of Augustus and the age of Justinian. The Blues and Greens who terrorized the great eastern cities in the fifth and sixth centuries were a far cry from the modest fan clubs of the first four centuries of the Empire. But both the character and the causes of these changes are very different from what has generally been assumed.

The assumption which I wish particularly to combat is that these changes represent a growth of popular sovereignty. This is the main interest and importance of the subject to most of those who have written on it—especially (though by no means exclusively) to Marxist historians. One scholar has claimed that a direct line ran from the hippodrome of Constantinople to the Russian Revolution.

It must be stated right away that such an interpretation of the character and role of the factions of the late Empire is pure modern hypothesis, wholly unsupported by contemporary evidence. If I had to substitute a general thesis of my own it would be that the 'rise' of the factions during this period actually meant a perversion or decline of the traditional means of popular expression. But the matter is altogether too complex to admit of solution in terms of such facile formulae. The political roles of the factions and the people respectively (for they are not identical) will occupy much of the second half of the book.

Meanwhile we may appropriately begin by asking a simple but basic question.

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I. What is a Circus Faction?

BYZANTINISTS have made very heavy weather of their factions. 'Il semble bien', wrote G. Bratianu in 1937, 'que l'origine et l'organisation des factions soit encore aujourd'hui un des problèmes les plus complexes et les moins éclairés de l'histoire byzantine'.¹ They have usually felt able to do little more than marvel at a *fait accompli*; for reasons unknown and probably unknowable the factions of Constantinople ceased to be the private sporting associations they had always been at Rome and turned into city-wide parties 'charged with functions and duties that had little in common with their original purpose.'²

The matter is not nearly so mysterious and complicated as has been imagined. Some of the problems of 'origins' that have puzzled scholars are non-existent, because (as we shall see) the factions never possessed most of the 'functions and duties' with which they have been credited. Others spring from a misconception about the so-called 'demes' (Ch. II). But much of the puzzlement has been generated by a simple failure to determine (or even ask) what is meant by the word faction. *What* was it that was private under the Principate but turned public under the late Empire?

We must in fact make a sharp distinction between the small body of professional performers who organized and took part in the actual shows, and the much larger bodies of spectators who merely watched. Most studies of at any rate the later period have confused the two, with unfortunate and far-reaching results.

Let us begin with the institutional side.³

¹ 'Empire et "démocratie" à Byzance', *BZ* xxxviii (1937), 94.

² F. Dvornik, 'The circus parties in Byzantium: their evolution and suppression' *BM* i (1946), 124.

³ To the best of my knowledge this is the first attempt to study the *evolution* of circus institutions. Friedlaender's sections in his own *SG* ii¹⁰ (ed. Wissowa 1922), 21-50 and in Marquardt/Wissowa, *Röm. Staatsverwaltung* iii² (1885), 511-24, collect much relevant material for the earlier period, but his picture (as always) is static. Since then nothing of value but A. Maricq's 'Factions du cirque et partis populaires', *BARB* cxxxvi (1950), 396-421, and J. R. Martindale's (regrettably

The organization of the games: domini factionum to factionarii

In the early Principate private individuals known as *domini factionum* hired out the horses and necessary equipment (including personnel) to those who were providing the games (*editores ludorum*, *agonothetes*).¹ These *domini* were evidently businessmen running their *factiones* for profit. When Commodus added extra race meetings to the calendar, the effect (if not, as his biographer alleges, the intention) of his action was 'to enrich the *domini factionum*'.²

Predictably, most were *equites*.³ Indeed, the fact that Augustus gave senators permission to breed horses⁴ suggests that equestrian monopoly of this lucrative profession was beginning to cause anxiety. Without them the *agonothete* could not give his games, and the *domini* soon became aware of their power. After Nero had increased the number of prizes, so that races lasted all day, the *domini* refused to hire out their teams for less than a whole day.⁵ This was hard for those without the imperial purse to dig into, and the independent and enterprising Fabricius Veiento refused their terms.⁶ He announced that he would run dogs instead of horses. Once it became clear that he meant what he said, the *domini* of the Reds and Whites gave way, though the Greens and Blues stood firm, and the Emperor's intervention was required before a compromise could be reached.

It was clearly the *domini*, not the charioteers, who ran the factions. When Nero's father, Cn. Domitius, tried to swindle victorious charioteers out of their prize money when he was

unpublished) 'Public Disorders in the Late Roman Empire' (Oxford, 1960), 63f. Chs. x-xv of H. A. Harris's *Sport in Greece and Rome* (1972) usefully discuss some technical aspects of Roman chariot racing, but do not get to grips with the basic institutional problems. For the later period nothing but the superficial and misleading opinions quoted *suo loco* below.

¹ For the sake of brevity I shall use the convenient term *agonothete* even in Roman contexts.

² *HA Comm.* 16.9. I am not entirely persuaded by G. Rodenwalt, *JDAI* lv (1940), 18, that the large figure on a relief of Trajanic date (his pl. 1) is a *dominus factionis*, though he might be.

³ See the story told by Pliny, *NH* x.34.

⁴ Dio, lv.10.

⁵ Suetonius, *Nero*, 22.

⁶ The event took place when he was praetor, that is (probably) in 54; see W. C. McDermott, 'Fabricius Veiento', *AJP* xci (1970), 129f.

praetor, it was the *domini* who protested. They managed to extract a guarantee that in future all prizes would be paid in spot cash.¹

It was not likely that private businessmen would long be allowed to retain so important a monopoly. By the fourth century (if not earlier) it had passed to the Emperors. Similar steps were early taken to remove gladiatorial games from private hands.² In the provinces (particularly in the East) where the Emperor did not provide the spectacles himself, gladiatorial and wild beast shows were linked so far as possible with celebrations of the imperial cult,³ so that even when private agonotheses paid the bill, they could not claim to have done so in their own right. None but the Emperors were to receive the gratitude of their people for such popular munificence.

A law addressed to the praefect of Rome in 381 distinguishes between the horses provided by the Emperor's own generosity ('mansuetudinis nostrae largitio') and those contributed by the various magistrates (by now the praetors and consuls only), adding that any successful horse was to remain in the service of the factions.⁴ This must have meant in practice that private agonotheses could no longer get away with hiring their horses. Since they would have to surrender the best ones to the faction stables, they would have to buy the lot. A law of 372 limits the number of horses from 'Phrygian herds' to be used for praetorian games—evidently a source that the Emperors did not want exhausted.⁵ Campanians were not allowed to use horses for their games unless they provided 2,000 modii of beans for each of the faction stables in Rome⁶—another example of the way private agonotheses were made to contribute to the Emperor's games as well as their own.

The Emperors maintained an absolute monopoly on the best herds. A law of 371 was apparently inspired by the discovery that a *factionarius* (of whom more below) had been selling off

¹ Suetonius, *Nero* 5.

² M. Grant, *Gladiators* (1967), 50f.; R. Auguet, *Cruauté et civilisation: les jeux romains* (1970), 25f.

³ L. Robert, *Les Gladiateurs dans l'orient grec* (1940), 270f., and cf. W. Liebeschuetz, *Historia* viii (1959), 123.

⁴ *Cod. Theod.* xv.7.6.

⁵ *Cod. Theod.* vi.4.19.

⁶ *Cod. Theod.* xv.10.2 (of 381).

stock from herds known as *Palmati* and *Hermogeni*.¹ In future, says the law, not even those unfit to race, whether through age or some other reason, are to be sold; they must be kept and fed from the public granaries. Only Spanish horses might be sold.

The difficulties encountered by the private agonothete are vividly illustrated by the stream of letters with which Q. Aurelius Symmachus badgered every friend and connection to help him procure suitable horses for his son's praetorian games in 401. 'His friends who lived in Spain or had connections there were thoroughly canvassed and asked to pick out for him the best horses in the best Spanish herds. As early as two or three years before the games were finally given, Symmachus sent his agents into Spain to buy horses. All his friends were asked to aid his agents, and high government officials were asked to furnish them with letters of recommendation and to speed their journey with warrants to use the public post.'² Nothing in all the varied forms of entertainment provided in his son's name by Symmachus cost him as much effort, worry, and money as the obtaining, transporting, and provisioning of his Spanish horses.³ Evidently there were no entrepreneurs such as Fabricius had dealt with to do all this work for him.⁴ Even in the private sector, there was no longer a place for the old-style *domini factionum*.

¹ *Cod. Theod.* xv.10.1. For the 'villa Pammati' (?= *Palmati*), in Cappadocia, 'unde veniunt equi curules', see *Itin. Burd.* 577.6 (*Itin. Romana*, ed. O. Cuntz (1929), p. 93). This law does not in fact prove (as Chastagnol alleges, *La Préfecture urbaine à Rome sous le Bas-Empire* (1960), 281) that the *factionarius* had the power to buy horses as well, though this is likely enough. On the supply of Cappadocian horses see too M. F. Patrucco, *Athenaeum* lxi (1973), 300f.

² J. A. McGeachy Jr., *Q. Aurelius Symmachus and the Senatorial Aristocracy of the West* (Diss. Chicago 1942), 107, quoting the relevant texts. For the scanty information on the breeding of race-horses see now K. D. White, *Roman Farming* (1970), 298-9, 505, to which add Justinian *Edict* xiii.15 on the price of race-horses—36 horses for 320 *solidi* at Alexandria (compare 3 *solidi* a horse for seventh-century Egypt, *P. Oxy.* 153 and 922). Romans apparently believed that mares should foal only every other year, which means that they would be unlikely to produce more than four or five in a lifetime, as against 15/20 today (White, p. 296): obviously this must have made pedigree racers rarer and dearer even than they need have been.

³ Spanish horses were sought after even for eastern hippodromes: *Amm. Marc.* xx.8.13; *Zonaras* xiii.10.18; *Symm. Epp.* iv. 62; *P. Oxy.* 922.4.

⁴ Not realizing the changed situation, Auguet, *Les Jeux romains* (1970), 185, curiously imagines that Symmachus deliberately dispensed with the *domini* so as to show that he could do better on his own!

Who, then, ran the factions now? It is significant that an inscription of 275 reveals to us a *dominus* who was also a charioteer, a Caesarean called Polyphemus who was 'dominus et agitator factionis russatae' of Rome.¹ Another inscription attests the African M. Aurelius Liber, 'dominus et agitator factionis prasinae' of Rome.² It is undated, but that Liber and Polyphemus were contemporaries is shown by a sarcophagus relief from Rome representing a race between four charioteers—two of them named as Liber and Polyphemus.³

Although horses were now mainly provided from the large imperial stables and fodder from the public granaries, someone still had to supervise and instruct the large staff of grooms, starters, sweepers, doctors, workmen, etc., not to mention pick and train the teams, advise and often enough (no doubt) mediate between temperamental drivers, while all the time keeping an eye open for promising new talent. In short, to manage the faction. Who would make a more natural successor to the old entrepreneur/impresario in this role than the senior charioteer of each faction? To put it in modern terms, when the business side became less important, the business manager was succeeded by the player manager.

This new-style manager of the now publicly maintained faction soon acquired a new title: *factionarius*. Late glossaries equate it with words or phrases clearly denoting leadership or headship of the faction.⁴ It is first attested as early as the first known 'player manager', Cl. Polyphemus, who is styled *factionarius* as well as *dominus* and *agitator*. Then we have a recently published papyrus referring to some barley destined for Hephaestion, *factionarius* of the Blues at Alexandria. In another document of the same date (315), this same Hephaestion is described as 'horsebreeder' (*ἵπποτρόφος*) of Alexandria.⁵ It is not excluded that he either was or had once been a charioteer himself, but

¹ *ILS* 5297.

² *ILS* 5296.

³ There are several extant examples of multiple representations of named charioteers: see those from Gerona and Barcelona discussed by A. Balil, *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* cli (1962), 257–351, pls. 24–57. There are even more of gladiators. Liber was evidently quite a celebrity: he appears on another mosaic from Rome, this time with a certain Hilarinus (see *Porphyrus*, p. 204).

⁴ *Corp. Gloss. Lat.* vii. 431, *factionarius* = ὁ τοῦ τᾶγματος ἡγούμενος.

⁵ *P. Cair. Isid.* 57 and 58.

his main duty was plainly the superintendence of the Blue stable.

From the eastern provinces in general we have (for reasons to be given in Ch. IX) no relevant evidence during the early Empire. By the fourth century chariot racing seems usually to have been a liturgy on private agonotheses; there is evidence from Antioch,¹ Gaza,² and Oxyrhynchus.³ By the sixth century, at Alexandria⁴ and Caesarea⁵ (in Palestine) as at Rome and Constantinople and no doubt most other large cities, the bill was largely if not entirely paid out of public funds. In smaller places such as Oxyrhynchus a wealthy local family, the Apions, still played a part.⁶

In North Africa and Spain there is evidence for the continued existence of private owners of racing stables, probably the normal practice in the western provinces. A mosaic from Cherchel (Iol Caesarea) in Algeria shows a horse standing idle with its name—Muccosus, 'Snuffles'—inscribed above it and 'Pr(asinus) Cl. Sabini' on its flank.⁷ Two different mosaics from late-second-century Sousse (Hadrumetum) show a number of horses with the inscription 'Sorothis' on the flank.⁸ A hippodrome scene from Barcelona shows four teams racing: 'Concordi' can be read on the flank of horses in two teams, 'Niceti' on the horses of one of the two others. Cl. Sabinus, Sorothis, Concordius, and Nicet(i)us are evidently the owners of these horses; whether or not *domini factionum* on the Roman model, at any rate private owners who made their living from the breeding of race-horses. The same probably applies to a mosaic from Constantine (Cirta) showing six horses eating from mangers (each named and so a race-horse of renown) in front of a large villa and stables, above which is inscribed 'Pompeianus'.⁹

¹ P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale à Antioche au iv^e siècle après J.-C.* (1955), 107.

² Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 20 (*PL* xxiii. 38).

³ *P. Oxy.* xvii. 2110, as interpreted by B. Lifshitz, *REG* lxx (1957), 123.

⁴ Justinian, *Edict* xiii.15.

⁵ See the inscription published by B. Lifshitz, *REG* lxx (1957), 118-132, and further below, p. 219.

⁶ A. C. Johnson and L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* (1949), 210.

⁷ J. M. C. Toynbee, *PBSR* xvi (1948), 31, with pl. III.6.

⁸ L. Foucher, *Inventaire des mosaïques: Sousse* (1960), no. 57.113, pl. xxvii.a; no. 57.120, pl. xxvii.b; cf. pls. xxx, ccxi.

⁹ Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 32 with pl. IV.8, and M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*² (1957), 750, n. 6.

By the fifth century the former circus colours had come to cover not only chariot-racing but also the entertainments of the theatre and the amphitheatre.¹ From Procopius' account of the Empress Theodora's misspent youth we learn of a dancer of the Greens (evidently their master dancer) who managed not only the dancing side of his faction, but their beast shows as well.²

However, by the beginning of the fifth century many of the more mundane administrative duties (the provision of rations for the performers, fodder for the beasts, etc.) were taken over by imperial officials bearing the pompous title *actuarii thymelae et equorum currulium*.³ As late as the tenth century we still find *actuarii* in charge of the organizational side of hippodrome activity, though there was also now an official in the imperial treasury (Sakellion) called *δομέστικος* (or *ἄρχων*) *τῆς θυμέλης* responsible for expenditure.⁴ The *factionarius* has by now moved up from the professionals to join the hierarchy of dignitaries chosen from the ranks of the partisans.⁵

It is entirely in keeping with this development that the title *factionarius* came to be applied, not now to a faction manager who was also a charioteer (no doubt a very senior and usually retired charioteer),⁶ but to the best charioteer in the faction. As early as our first attested *factionarius* in 275 the title seems to have carried honorific associations over and above such administrative duties as it implied. Here is the inscription:⁷

Cl. Aurelio Polyphemo domino et agitatori factionis russatae, togeni Caesareus (? τῷ γένει Καισαρεύς), sui temporis primo et solo factionario ob gloria [. . .

When the Emperor Theophilus (829-42) competed as a charioteer the people greeted him with the cry *ἀσύγκριτος φακτιον-*

¹ See Ch. VIII.

² *Anecd.* ix. 5.

³ *Cod. Theod.* viii.7.21-2 (of 426); see pp. 220f.

⁴ J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (1911), 95.

⁵ See p. 20.

⁶ The inscription which attests Liber as *dominus* of his faction mentions also that he had won 3,000 victories (*ILS* 5296), more than such champions as Scorpis (2,048) and Diocles (1,462), a total to our knowledge only beaten by one Muclosus, with 3,559 (*ILS* 5287.19). If not already retired, Liber must by this time have been very much a veteran.

⁷ *ILS* 5297.

ἀρης,¹ where the ἀσύγκριτος ('peerless') reveals clearly enough the honorific character of the title.

The only other *factionarius* of whom we have any information is the incomparable Porphyrius Calliopas, greatest of all the heroes of the Byzantine hippodrome. He is described on his arrival at Antioch in 507 as ἀπὸ φακτιοναρίων Κωνσταντινουπόλεως.² This means, not that he was sent 'by the *factionarii* of Constantinople'³ but that he was an 'ex-*factionarius*' of Constantinople (compare the standard Byzantine practice of representing *ex-consul* ἀπὸ ὑπάτων, *ex-praefectus* ἀπὸ ἐπαρχῶν etc.). Now by 507 Porphyrius had for years been astonishing the capital by the agility and coolness with which he changed factions. Within a decade, between about his fifteenth and twenty-fifth year, he had won so many triumphs for both Blues and Greens that both had put up statues to him; the Greens one and the Blues a quite unprecedented three.⁴ He must presumably have been *factionarius* of both by turns. In view both of his frequent transfers and his youth, he can hardly have been the 'manager' of either in any very significant sense.

By the middle Byzantine period, as we can see from the *Book of Ceremonies*, *factionarius* was the title reserved for the top charioteer of the Blues and Greens alone. The Red and White champions bore only the less honorific title *micropanites*⁵ (μικροπανίτης, he of the lesser *pannus* or πάν(ν)ος, flag or colour). This refinement must be later than the third century, since Polyphemus was *factionarius* of the Reds. This restriction of the title to the Blues and Greens perhaps dates from the time when it still connoted some sort of headship of the faction. For after the Reds and Whites merged into the organization of the Greens and Blues respectively, there would only have been room for one head of the new joint organizations. But in the hippodrome each colour continued to race its own team, and when *factionarius* came to mean no more than top driver, a new title had to be invented for the Red and White champions. *Micropanites*

¹ George the Monk, p. 707. 21f. Muralt.

² Malalas, 395.22f.

³ So Martindale, 'Public Disorders', p. 71.

⁴ See my *Porphyrius*, Ch. V.

⁵ See (e.g.) A. Vogt, *Constantin Porphyrogénète: le livre de cérémonies: commentaire* ii (1940), 130.

betrays itself at once by its hybrid formation as that *rara avis*, a Byzantine innovation in the circus terminology that the New Rome took over wholesale in its often incomprehensible Latin from the Old.

So by the early Byzantine period the factions proper, the organizations responsible for putting on the races, had entirely lost their former independence. Horses were provided from the Emperor's own stables or (less often) by private agonothetes. The performers themselves and the staffs of hippodrome, theatres, and amphitheatre alike constituted a sort of hereditary guild—or rather two guilds, the Blues and Greens—administered, paid, and even fed by imperial quartermasters. It is hardly surprising that *factionarius* should shift in meaning from the now superfluous 'manager' to simply 'champion'.

The partisans

Any student of the literature of late Antiquity will know only too well the lengths to which a Byzantine would go rather than (a) use an everyday proper name, or (b) once used repeat it. True to Byzantine form the circus partisans appear under a wide variety of linguistic disguises.

The names fall into three general categories. First, simple words denoting the appropriate colour: Blues, Greens, etc.—though a Simocatta will prefer *κυαναυγής* and *χλοάζων*,¹ and even humble papyri and curse tablets can rise to *καλλάϊνος* (variously misspelt) for Blue.² Second, phrases using the term *pars* or its Greek equivalent *μέρος*, with or without specification of colour or number (four, two, both, each, etc.—this paradoxical discrepancy in their very number will be discussed in Ch. III). The third category involves the 'deme' (*δῆμοι* / *δημόται*) complex to be analysed in the following chapter, with or without either of the other formulae: that is to say *οἱ δῆμοι tout court*, *οἱ δῆμοι τῶν Βενέτων*, or *οἱ δῆμοι τοῦ μέρους τῶν*

¹ *Hist.* viii. 7.9, 11.

² Audollent, *Defix. Tab.* (1904), from Aphcca in Syria, 15.5; 15.15; 16.7, 11, 12, 13; the curse tablet from Berytus published by R. Mouterde, *Mél. Beyrouth* xv (1930), 111, 112, 117 (for the date of both, below p. 194); *P. Cair. Isid.* 58.13; *Corp. Gloss. Lat.* iii.174.9, *callinus*=*venetus*; II.337.28-9, *καλλάϊνον*=*venetum*, *καλλάϊνος*=*venetianus*; *P. Strasb.* 287 (s.vi, unknown provenance)—quaintly misinterpreted by the editor, P. Bureth ('cours d'eau'!), correctly by J. Rea, *JHS* lxxxvi (1966), 220.

Βενέτων. The purist Procopius will often use the general term *στασιῶται*¹, 'partisans' (like Cassius Dio before him)²—or even just call them 'young men'.³

Faced with such an *embarras de richesses*, it is a curious irony that modern scholars should have rejected all these terms. Instead they have settled for the one formula which no ancient writer of any period ever used: 'circus factions'. Faction naturally suggests Latin *factio*, and older scholars writing in Latin used this very word quite openly. Yet in every single ancient text where the word *factio* occurs, there can be no question but that it refers to the professional performers, not to their fan clubs. Furthermore, by the time the partisans had become at all prominent in the life of the cities, the word *factio* had fallen out of use even to describe the professionals.

Terms formed from the word *factio*, such as *factionarius*, always refer to the professionals, not the partisans. From inscriptions we hear of (for example) a 'Gigas agit(ator) factionis prasinae',⁴ a 'Hyla medicus factionis venetae',⁵ all employees, whether as performers or staff, of the *factiones* proper. The only passage known to me where the word is used in connection with a dispute between partisans is from the *Passio* of Saint Perpetua, where a simile refers to people 'de circo redeuntes et de *factionibus* certantes'.⁶ Yet a closer inspection will reveal that those disputing are not themselves described as *factiones*: the *factiones* are the *source* of the dispute—the performers back in the circus the partisans have just left.

Of course it does not much matter what name we use to describe the partisans so long as we know what we are doing. But do we?

We have seen already that many of the original Latin terms of the circus were either given Greek equivalents in Constantinople, or where no equivalent lay to hand, simply transliterated. At an early stage in modern scholarly inquiry it was hastily assumed that the Greek equivalent for *factio* was *μέρος*. This is demonstrably false. As a number of passages make perfectly clear, *μέρος* is in fact the precise equivalent, in this as in

¹ *Anecd.* ix.33, 35, 43; x.15; xvii.2, 3, 41 and x.16 (*ἀντιστασιῶται*).

² lxxiii.4.2; lxxviii.8.2; lxxix.14.2; lxxiii.4.2 (*ἀντιστασιασταί*).

³ See p. 75-6.

⁴ *ILS* 5280.

⁵ *ILS* 5310.

⁶ xiii.6.

many other meanings and contexts,¹ of Latin *pars*. μέρος Πρασίνων represents *pars Prasini*, μέρη on its own *partes*, τὸ ἕτερον μέρος, *pars adversa* or *contraria*, and so on. In one of the bilingual laws of Justinian πρὸς τι τῶν μερῶν appears in the Latin version as ‘ad aliquam partium’.²

The significance of this false identification of μέρος with *factio* lies in the fact that μέρος, unlike *factio*, is applied indifferently to both the faction proper and the partisans. Not surprisingly, coupled with the modern misuse of ‘faction’ to denote partisans, this has supported the misconception that there is no difference between the partisans and what I have been stubbornly styling the ‘faction proper’.

The truth is that *pars* / μέρος is a vague term of quite general reference, while *factio* is a technical term. This is sufficiently illustrated by the fact that *factio* gave birth to precise titles like *factionarius* and *dominus factionis*, while *pars* / μέρος did not. This is why the latter can refer, not only to circus professionals and partisans alike, but also to the parties or sides of *any* group of people in any context. When writing of Jews Socrates uses the phrase τὸ ἕτερον μέρος to refer to Christians.³ In another context the two μέρη might have been orthodox and monophysite, though in the chroniclers a conflict between μέρη unspecified will normally be between the circus partisans, much the most notorious pair of parties.

There is in fact no Greek equivalent for *factio*, nor did it even suffer the fate of so many other intractable Latin circus terms, simple transliteration (like *urna* / ὄρνα, *bigarius* / βηγάριος, etc.). This calls for comment, since words which serve a useful function do not normally vanish for no reason. Perhaps it no longer had a function. The four original factions had changed almost out of recognition by the fifth century; nor was *factio*, a word long associated with the circus, even appropriate for the two massive state-supported and administered corporations that now provided every sort of public entertainment.

factio disappears from every context it had once adorned. In the earlier period a man would call himself ‘agitator *factionis*

¹ For example, μέρη and *partes* are both used in late texts to mean ‘area’, ‘territory’: see E. Löfstedt, *Syntactica* ii (1933), 44of.

² *Nov.* 17.2.

³ *HE* vii.13.

prasinae'. By the Byzantine age the abbreviated style we find occasionally in the early centuries (e.g. 'hortator prasini') is standard. The early fourth-century *Notitia* of Rome lists the 'stabula IV factionum'. The *Notitia* of Constantinople does not include stables, but other texts refer only to 'stables of the Blues (or Greens)'.¹

factionarius lived on, though in a new meaning, but *factio* simply fell out of use. Quite how unfamiliar it had become by the tenth century is strikingly illustrated by the word φακτίω coined afresh from *factionarius* to denote the symbol of his rank: in the *Book of Ceremonies* it means a gold medallion.²

Naturally, however, performers and partisans remained as separate in the Byzantine as they had in the Roman age. The *Book of Ceremonies*, for example, still carefully distinguishes between the 'party' (μέρος) or 'demesmen' (δημόται) of the Blues and Greens, and the 'taxis' (τάξις) of the hippodrome.³ The terminology might be more significant than has been appreciated. For (among other meanings) 'taxis' is the standard Greek equivalent for Latin *officium*, 'staff' (e.g. *CJ* i. 34.2; 42.1). The 'party' and 'demesmen' are unquestionably the partisans and their officials, and there can be little doubt that the 'taxis' consisted of the staff of the hippodrome itself, mere employees responsible, under the direction of the *actuarius*, for the organisation of the actual races – in effect the former *factio*. *A fortiori* the distinction must still have operated in the fifth and sixth centuries.

We come now to the reason why it is so essential to preserve it. Even so sober and independent a scholar as E. Stein could assume that the 'factions' of the late Empire had all forms of public entertainment 'in their hands'.⁴ It will hardly be necessary to cite the multitude of less distinguished authorities for this grave error. For as soon as we ask in which sense the word 'faction' is being used here, it will become clear that the statement is either false or trivial. False, in that the partisans had no *control* whatever of any public entertainments; trivial, because who

¹ R. Guiland, *Études topogr.* i (1969), 297–9.

² ii.132 Vogt.

³ *De Caer.* 798–9 Bonn: cf. Rambaud, *De byzantino hippodromo* (1870), 102f., Guiland, *BS* xxx (1969), 11–13, and for the question of their salaries, Bury, *EMR* xxii (1907), 220.

⁴ *Bas-Empire* i (1959), 294.

but the staffs of the hippodrome and theatre would organize the shows held there? Neither *paid* for them.

F. Dvornik, in a discussion of the (alleged) decline of the factions between the seventh and tenth centuries, remarked that on the evidence of the *Book of Ceremonies* 'the Greens and Blues must have lost their autonomous status . . . The imperial Chancellery took complete charge, *even financially*, of all public sports, while the factions of the Greens and the Blues were left with only executive powers' (my italics).¹ In a more recent study of the same topic R. Guiland has gone so far as to ascribe the decline of the political activity of the factions directly to this supposed imperial takeover of their finances. In return for his financial support 'les factions devaient fidélité et respect à l'empereur. A condition qu'elles s'abstinssent de s'immiscer dans la politique, elles pouvaient compter sur la bienveillance impériale.'²

It seems clear that all these scholars envisaged the factions in their heyday as both financing and administering the public entertainments with which they were associated. Since in practice it is the partisans, not the professionals, that they have in mind, the assumption is doubly false. It would in any case have been astonishing purely on *a priori* grounds if the Emperors had left, not just in private hands, but in irresponsible and hostile hands, so vital and potent a public service. The hypothesis that the political independence of the factions in their heyday was based on their financial independence is accordingly false.

It is true that Dvornik was able to cite what looks like a clear and categorical statement by an ancient (or at any rate twelfth-century) writer to the effect that the Blues and Greens *did* finance chariot races: Theodore Balsamon's commentary on the twenty-fourth canon of the Quinisext Council of 691-2. Yet anyone who takes the trouble to read this commentary through in context can hardly fail to see that it is not only ill-informed but downright tendentious.

Balsamon set himself the task of showing why the traditional

¹ *BM* i (1946), 132. Cf. Vasiliev's remark that the factions 'had their own treasury for financing the charioteers' (*History of the Byzantine Empire* i (1952), 155).

² *BS* xxx (1969), 1f.

Church ban on the clergy attending the circus did not really mean quite what it said. In the bad old days, he writes:¹

the demes exercised sovereignty at the chariot races: they held them when and how they liked at their own expense, for they owned buildings, horses, and stables (which still exist today) and drew revenues to finance the racing. The emperor was invited, but had no authority there,² and many remarkable disturbances took place during race meetings, with some joining the Blues and some the Greens. On occasions civil war broke out between the two parties, with the demes (*δημόται*) spitting out shameful things in the emperor's presence, as is related in various chronicles, during the reigns of Justinian, Anastasius, Phocas, and other Emperors.

This is how things *used* to be. 'But', says Balsamon, 'the canon does not forbid the races that take place today, in front of and under the superintendence (*ἐπιτροπή*) of the Emperor.'

Many clerical consciences would be eased if it could be shown that canon law did not apply to the well-ordered spectacles of the twelfth century. Unfortunately, the facts have to be twisted a little to reach this reasonable conclusion. It is simply not true that the emperor was only 'invited' to the hippodrome in the days of Anastasius and Justinian. He not only regularly attended but had full authority in the by then thoroughly christianized ceremonial of race days (Ch. IX). In order to call John Chrysostom as a witness for the defence, Balsamon is obliged flagrantly to misrepresent his attitude to the circus and theatre.³ It is in fact clear from the extract quoted above that Balsamon is simply guessing on the basis of (a) references in chronicles (evidently the same chronicle tradition that we have today—the various redactions and adaptations of John Malalas and John of Antioch), and (b) the existence of the faction stables in his own

¹ PG cxxxvii. 592.

² It must be pointed out that Dvornik's translation of this whole passage is so inaccurate as to be almost unusable: e.g. this clause, *τοῦ βασιλέως προσκαλουμένου, καὶ εἰς τοῦτο μὴ ἐξουσιάζοντος*, appears as 'they insulted the Emperor, but he was unable to check the abuses'.

³ He suggests that Chrysostom would never have urged the banning of circus games on the Sabbath if they had been regarded as anathema on weekdays also—a typically misleading rhetorician's argument from probability. No one familiar with Chrysostom's incessant attacks on the circus and theatre can have been in any doubt that he would indeed have liked them banned on every day of the week (see p. 224). Whether or not this was a realistic attitude is of course an altogether different matter.

day. The existence of the stables proves nothing, of course, about the financial independence of the factions: the 'revenues' mentioned may have been (as they were, for example, at sixth-century Caesarea)¹ revenues from taxes or some other public or imperial source. And had Balsamon read the chronicles more carefully, he would have realized that they prove conclusively the *dependence* of the factions on the emperor. The 'demes' could *not* hold games 'when and how they liked'.

Malalas records how in 520 the factions (*μέρη*, evidently here the partisans) begged the Emperor to provide the best dancers, the Greens asking for Caramallus and the Blues for an Alexandrian called Porphyrius (to be distinguished from his more famous homonym).² Compare the unimpeachable testimony of an inscription from the base of one of the statues erected by the Blues to *the* Porphyrius *c.* 500: an acclamation put in the mouth of the Greens begs the Emperor to give them Porphyrius (*δὸς ἡμῖν Ποφύριον*).³ When Porphyrius arrived at Antioch in 507, he was 'given' to the Greens (*ἐδόθη εἰς τὸ Πράσινον μέρος*), presumably by the appropriate imperial representative in Antioch.⁴ Longinus the brother of Zeno 'gave' (*πάρεσχε*) each of the four colours a replacement for their aging lead dancers.⁵ One of the epigrams from the statue of the sixth-century charioteer Uranius claims that the emperor had brought him out of retirement 'to please the partisans' (*δήμοισι φέρων χάριν*).⁶ In the West we find King Theodoric asking the aristocratic patrons of the Greens to choose the new Green dancer for them.⁷ Never do we hear of the partisans themselves providing or even choosing their own star performers. They had no more say in such things than the football fan today in the selection, coaching, and tactics of the team he supports. The administration of the games, the hiring and firing of staff and performers, the procuring, breeding, and training of animals and so forth, was in the hands of the hippodrome professionals—but only with the Emperor's approval, and if he or someone appointed by him (the consul, for example) supplied the necessary funds.

¹ B. Lifshitz, *REG* lxx (1957), 118f. Dvornik mistranslates the Balsamon passage "drew revenues *from* the entertainments for their upkeep". There was (of course) no revenue from ancient spectacles of this nature.

² *Exc. de Insid.* p. 170.30f.; cf. *Porphyrius*, pp. 169f.

³ Cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 67.

⁴ Malalas, 396.1f.

⁵ Malalas, 386.14f.

⁶ *A.Plan.* 376.1-2.

⁷ Cassiodorus, *Var.* i.20.

The partisans are then (as will be shown more fully in Ch. IV) simply supporters' clubs. As such they will have been relatively small bodies, probably seldom more than a thousand or so in any one city. Our only actual figures are for Constantinople in 602: 900 Blues and 1,500 Greens.¹

The *Cletorologion* of Philotheus lists a whole hierarchy of faction dignitaries in their precedence as established c. 900:² the demarch (or democrat), his second-in-command (*δευτερεύων*), archivist (*χαρτουλάριος*), poet (*ποιητής*), archon, 'neighbourhood superintendent' (*γειτονιάρχης*), musician (*μελιστής*), *notarius*, *factionarius*, *micropanites*, 'leaders' (*τὰ πρωτεῖα*), and finally ordinary partisans (*δημόται*). A late seal reveals a protodemarch.³

If nothing else the Greek names alone proclaim virtually the whole list as a creation of the developed Byzantine period, a complete break with the Roman tradition. It is of course likely that there were officers of some sort even in the earliest days, if only to organize the social occasions that have always been so important a function of such associations. But the first figures we hear about are the patrons (*προστάται*)—and then not until the fifth century.

The role of the patrons has been altogether misunderstood. To some they are just the later demarchs⁴ or the earlier *domini factionum* under another name.⁵ To others they are influential partisans, those who contributed to faction funds or decided faction policy.⁶ Such uncertainty is strange, since there is no more familiar figure in the late Roman world than the patron, and it is difficult to believe that the patrons of circus partisans could have been very different from all the other patrons of the age. Patronage took many forms, from the patron of the dockers' or bakers' guild to the patrons of whole towns and villages, a sinister and illegal phenomenon against which the government waged a perpetual battle. But all are at bottom

¹ Simocatta, *Hist.* viii.7.11.

² See Bury, *Imperial Administrative System* (1911), 105-6, Guiland, *BS xxx* (1969), 6 and N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de présence byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles* (CNRS, Paris 1972), 326-7. The fullest treatment remains that of A. Rambaud, *de byz. hippodromo* (1870), 90f.

³ G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'emp byz.* (1884), 144.

⁴ e.g. Guiland, *BS xxx* (1969), 1, n.1.

⁵ G. Bratianu, *BZ xxxviii* (1937), 96 (rightly rebutted by Maricq, *BARB xxxvi* (1950), 399, n.1.)

⁶ Martindale, 'Public Disorders', pp. 73-4.

no more than refinements of the ancient and basic Roman institution of patronage and clientship.¹

It is the former sort that concerns us here. It was standard practice for aristocrats or other men of consequence to be offered the *patrocinium* of a guild, and most felt it enough of a distinction to include on their *cursus honorum*.² Whether or not there was a formal contract, the obligations of both parties were clear enough. The patron would protect the interests of his guild members, both collectively and individually, and they in turn would present him with flattering addresses and perhaps a statue as well as furthering his interests in more practical ways. An association of obvious benefit to both parties—and one that did not die with the Romans.

Early in the sixth century Theodoric the Goth asked the patricians Albinus and Avienus to undertake the *patrocinium* of the Greens, as their father had before them.³ Now it is a classic feature of Roman patronage that the son succeeds to his father's *patrocinia*. These two great aristocrats, hereditary patrons (no doubt) of numerous city guilds already (and perhaps a town or two as well), simply added the patronage of the Greens to their list. Of Plato, patron of the Greens at Constantinople in the late fifth century, we know only that Anastasius made him prefect of the city in 498⁴—presumably in the hope that he would use his influence on his own turbulent Greens at a time when they were causing a lot of trouble. Theodoric had likewise hoped that Albinus and Avienus would be able to settle the internal dissensions of the Greens at Rome.

More interesting is Chrysaphius, patron of the Greens both at Constantinople and (according to Malalas) everywhere else too under Theodosius II. Malalas concludes his account of Chrysaphius' wealth and power with the remark: 'for he was patron of the Greens'. A few pages later he describes how Theodosius's successor Marcian had Chrysaphius executed as a wronger of many 'and as patron of the Greens'.⁵ The real basis

¹ See most recently W. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (1972), 192f.

² A. Chastagnol, *La Préfecture urbaine* (1960), 461-2; and see now the full study by G. Clemente, 'Il patronato nei collegia dell'impero romano', *Studi classici e orientali* xxi (1972), 142-229.

³ Cassiodorus, *Var.* i. 20.

⁴ Malalas, 395.4.

⁵ Malalas, 363.7, 368.8: the excerpt in the Grotta Ferrata palimpsest (PG

of Chrysaphius' power was undoubtedly the ascendancy he exercised over Theodosius II as his chamberlain, and Malalas may well have exaggerated, as he so often does, the significance and relevance of the factional issue. Nevertheless, the implication is that Chrysaphius used the Greens to further his own ends. Valuable information, certainly, but it tells us more about Chrysaphius than the Greens. There is nothing new here. The use of clients (especially guilds and similar associations) for the political ends of their patrons was in the best (or worst) Roman tradition, under both Republic and Empire. Why else should so many powerful men have given themselves so much work? Not from vanity alone, we may be sure. Damianus, patron of the Blues at Tarsus under Justinian,¹ was killed in the course of a night *mêlée* with the governor's troops. Unfortunately we do not know whether he was egging them on or holding them back.

When discussing the patrons scholars have curiously missed the passage where Procopius says that Justinian 'set himself up quite openly as the *προστάτης* of the partisans'.² Whether or not he was formally and legally their patron is less important than the fact which emerges clearly from Procopius' account: that he treated them in the classic style of the 'good' patron. He gave them payment and preferment, turned a blind eye to their wrongdoings and—a standard activity of the patron—protected them from the full rigour of the law.³

The patron of the circus partisans is not then a 'faction official' in any real sense. He need not even have been a partisan himself, though no doubt usually was. Nor were the circus fans the only sports fans to have patrons. Some gladiator fans (*φίλοπλοι*) of Ephesus put up a statue to their 'very own patron' (*ἴδιος προστάτης*).⁴

lxxv.1816) adds *πανταχοῦ*, 'everywhere'. The Church Slavonic version (trans. Spinka and Downey, 1940, pp. 84, 88) interestingly represents *πάτρων και προστάτης* by 'ally and defender'.

¹ Procopius, *Anecd.* xxix.30f. Was the *protocancellarius* George, linked with the Blues in an inscription from Didyma (*J. Didyma* 604, with L. Robert, *Hellenica* xi/xii (1960), 490-2), perhaps a patron, if only of the Blues of Didyma?

² *Anecd.* vii.41.

³ *Anecd.* vii, *passim*, and x.16f. The Emperor as *προστάτης τοῦ δήμου* is of course no new notion: see Z. Yavetz, *Plebs and Princeps* (1969), 153, on the Julio-Claudian period, and J. Béranger *Recherches sur l'aspect idéologique du Principat* (1953), 261f., tracing the theme of the 'chef politique' as *προστάτης τοῦ δήμου* back to the fifth century B.C.

⁴ L. Robert, *Les Gladiateurs dans l'orient grec* (1940), no. 201.

The demarchs are quite different. They are evidently officials with administrative duties and responsibilities, one for each of the two major colours. When Maurice wanted to know how many Blues and Greens there were in 602, he summoned the demarchs, who came armed with their registers.¹ A couple of days later it was the demarch of the Greens whom Maurice's kinsman Germanus approached in his bid for Maurice's throne.² The following year Phocas burned the Green demarch alive, and in 607 threatened to execute both demarchs.³

Not only are they the leaders and spokesmen of the partisans. They can be held responsible for their fellows, and even punished for their wrongdoings. Yet for all their obvious importance, they are not mentioned before 602. It has often been assumed that they had always existed, but (as we shall see in Ch. IX) it is more likely that they were first appointed not long before they are first attested, late in the sixth century. The Greek title in itself points to a Byzantine innovation.

It is not only the demarch who makes so late an appearance. Of the rest of the officials of the faction hierarchy two are attested in the early seventh century, one more in 562; all three in connection with ceremonial. The first demarchs on record, in 602, are likewise mentioned for their role in a ceremonial occasion outside the imperial palace.⁴

In the seventh century as in the tenth the demarch was appointed by the emperor. The implication (as we shall see) is that not just the demarch but the entire faction hierarchy is an *official* creation of the late sixth century, less glamorous forerunners of the more elaborate hierarchy of Philotheus but, like them, mainly concerned with imperial ceremonial.

Thus there is no continuity or connection between the *dominus factionis* of the principate, a private businessman responsible only for the administrative side of circus games, and the later demarch and his team, representatives of the partisans but appointed by the emperor. By the Byzantine age performer and partisan alike were imperial dependents.

¹ Simocatta, viii.7.11.

² Simocatta, viii.9.

³ *Chron. Pasch.* 695 (with Y. Janssens, *Byzantion* xi (1936), 519f.); Theophanes, p. 294.27 de Boor (Janssens, p. 522).

⁴ See pp. 258f. below.

II. The Demes

The Blues and the Greens of the sixth and seventh centuries were composed of two elements—the circus factions and the municipal demes. Two problems relating to them have not yet been solved by historians: (1) In practice how were the demes and factions related to one another? (2) In practice what was the distinction between a deme and a faction?¹

So ONE recent study, reflecting a widely held view. It is, of course, small wonder that no satisfactory solution has been found to a problem posed in these terms. In the senses here assigned to them, neither deme nor faction ever existed.

Factio was the name borne under the Principate by the professionals who put on the games. By the sixth century it had passed out of use.² What scholars have in mind when they write of factions in this context (meaning the partisans if they draw a distinction at all) is what Byzantine sources style ‘parties’, *μέρη*. We have seen that this term refers to nothing more specialized than the partisans of the Blues and Greens.³ It remains to be shown that the ‘deme’ formulae similarly refer to nothing more specialized than the partisans of the Blues and the Greens. At no time or place was there any distinction between the terms. This is why Byzantine writers were able to use them quite interchangeably—much to the embarrassment of modern scholars vainly trying to differentiate between them.

It will be unnecessary to illustrate this interchangeability, since it has never been seriously questioned. Fine (for example) frankly admits that, owing to what he takes to be their ‘confusion and lack of clarity about the two groups’, contemporary writers were evidently ‘unable to distinguish the activities of one from the other’. The best that exponents of the traditional view can offer is the hypothesis that there must once have been a time when the two groups were distinct. Several other hypotheses then become necessary, to explain first the nature of this

¹ J. V. A. Fine Jr., *Sbornik Rad. Viz. Inst.* x (1967), 29.

² p. 15.

³ p. 15.

supposed distinction and then how it came to be forgotten. This chapter seeks to confront hypotheses with facts.

The municipal demes

It was T. Uspenskij, it seems, who first made the unhappy suggestion that the Byzantine demes might be descended from the demes of Athens.¹ On this theory, the Byzantine demes are municipal units, residential areas of the city. This was a welcome notion, since it seemed to provide the key to their behaviour. Not senseless rivalry, as dullards like Gibbon had supposed, but a sudden resurgence of the independent spirit that had once dwelt in the demes of fifth-century (B.C.) Athens. The violence of the demes could be seen (in J. B. Bury's words) as 'a last struggle for municipal independence on which it is the policy of imperial absolutism to encroach'.²

Despite isolated protests³ this strange fancy still has many adherents.⁴ Nor have even the few protesters seen the whole truth. But before coming to what the demes really were, it will be appropriate to explain why they were not and cannot have been 'municipal units'.⁵

(1) While there were demes in the Attic sense in Alexandria, and various other Hellenistic foundations,⁶ there is no evidence

¹ *Viz. Vrem.* i (1894), 1f. (German abstract by E. K(urtz) in *BZ* iv (1895), 208-9).

² Appendix 10 to his edition of Gibbon, volume iv.

³ See the works of Maricq, Martindale, and Kourbatov quoted below, p. 39.

⁴ See for example Fine (quoted above); S. Winkler, 'Byzantinische Demen und Faktionen', in *Sozialökonomische Verhältnisse im Alten Orient und im Klassischen Altertum*, ed. R. Günther and G. Schrof (1961), 317-28; Gh. Cront, 'Les Dèmes et les partis politiques dans l'empire byzantin aux V^e-VII^e siècles', *Rev. des ét. sud-est europ.* vii (1969), 671-4; and N. Pigulewskaja, *Byzanz auf den Wegen nach Indien* (1969), 43-4—all still under the influence of A. P. D'jakonov's long and learned but fantastic 'Vizantijskije dimy i fakcii' in *Viz Sbornik* (1945), 144-227 (French summary by M. Paulová, *BS* x (1949), 81-7).

⁵ A tiresome but very necessary task. Since Maricq did not take the trouble to support his brusque dismissal in *BARB* xxxvi (1950), 407, S. Winkler (for example) was able to dismiss it as brusquely in turn (*op. cit.* 310), while Cront completely ignored it. And the latest edition of Ostrogorsky's *History of the Byzantine State* (1968), 66-7, while referring to Maricq's work as 'particularly important' (p. 67, n.3), has no qualms about repeating Bury's formula that 'The demes were the urban populace organised as a local militia' (*Imperial Administrative System* (1911), 105, n.2).

⁶ On Alexandria, Naucratis, Ptolemais, Antinoopolis, see P. Jouguet, *La Vie municipale dans l'Égypte romaine* (1911), 121-50, and P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*

that they even existed at Constantinople or indeed at most of the other cities of Asia Minor racked by the violence of *δημοί* from the fifth century on. The 'deme-organization' of Constantinople is no more than a hypothesis created to explain the later use of the term *δημοί*—and we shall soon see that it cannot even do this.

Had there ever been demes of the Attic or Alexandrian sort at Constantinople, it is strange indeed that Stephanus of Byzantium, writing at Constantinople in the sixth century, should have felt it necessary to gloss the word *δημος* 'παρ' *Ἀθηναίοις κώμη*. He did so because for him the word had an altogether different meaning. For Antioch the argument from silence is virtually impregnable. Thanks to the abundant surviving writings of Libanius, we know more about the municipal life of Antioch in the fourth century than of any other city in the ancient world.¹ From the fifth century on Antioch was if anything more plagued by the *δημοί* of the factions than even Constantinople. Yet it is certain that Antioch never had demes in the Attic sense.²

(2) Constantinople was divided, like Rome, into *regiones* (in Greek *ῥεγεῶνες, κλίματα*) and *γειτονίαι*. The Latin equivalents of *δημος* and *δημοί* are, not *regio, vicus, pagus* or any other word of geographical or municipal reference, but (as will be illustrated below) *populus* and *populi*. For the moment it will suffice to remark that on the 'municipal' interpretation of *δημοί* it would be impossible to explain this equation.

(3) The traditional interpretation can explain the plural in (e.g.) *οἱ δημοί τῶν Βενέτων* easily enough: there would be several of these municipal units to each faction. But what of the

(1972), 39f. For some other cities with demes, A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City* (1940), 159. The existence of demes at Ephesus seems indicated by some unpublished inscriptions referred to by H. Vettiers, *Anzeiger Öst. Akad. d. Wiss., Phil.-hist. Kl.* 107 (1970 [1971]), 122.

¹ Assembled in P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale à Antioche au IV^e siècle après J.-C.* (1955), and W. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: city and imperial administration in the later Roman Empire* (1972).

² In the time of Antiochus Epiphanes there had been an official called *δήμαρχος* at Antioch (Polybius, xxvi. 1.4), but he had evidently disappeared by late imperial times, nor is there any reason to think that he ever had anything to do with any demes. Antioch was in fact divided into 18 local *tribes* (*φυλαί*), which still existed in Libanius' day under the superintendence of *ἐπιμεληταί* (the evidence is collected in Liebeschuetz, *Antioch* (1972), 123-4).

singular ὁ δῆμος τῶν Βενέτων? Our sources alternate between the singular and plural with seemingly total indifference. Indeed, the singular is commoner in our earliest source for the use of these terms, the epigrams from the early sixth-century charioteer monuments. And if it is objected that the diction of the epigrams is too classicizing to provide decisive evidence in such a matter, there is δῆμος Πρασίων in the popular Greek of one of the prose acclamations on a monument of Porphyrius that can be dated to within a year or so either side of 500.¹ How could a plurality of residential demes still be known collectively as ὁ δῆμος?

(4) That certain areas of the city might become influential is not in itself impossible, since a given area might consist largely of one profession or guild, and guilds were prominent in public life then as in medieval and indeed modern times. Yet when we hear of guilds active in public affairs,² it is invariably as guilds, never as dwellers in or representatives of this or that area of the city. Nor is there any evidence for areas of the city under their true names, *regiones* or γειτονίαι, taking part in public life as such. It is true that there is a γειτονιάρχης on the staff of the demarch in the tenth century³—but only one. Similarly, there is only one demarch to each of the two colours, whereas on the traditional view each of these alleged ‘demes’ had its own demarch.

(5) Even granted that areas of the city, presumably representing people of all ages, classes, and professions, took part in public life as such, how and why did they ever come to be so completely identified and assimilated with partisans of charioteers in the hippodrome? No exponent of the traditional view has so far offered even a possible much less a plausible explanation of so unexpected and improbable a union.⁴

(6) Perhaps more important still, *when* is this union supposed to have taken place? So far back, apparently, that by the sixth century the original distinction between the two partners was

¹ See *Porphyrius*, p. 67.

² The exaggerated emphasis laid on the alleged political activity of the factions has caused scholars to neglect the role of the guilds in the early Byzantine period: see below, p. 85.

³ p. 92, n. 3.

⁴ D'jakonov's view (by implication refuted in the preceding chapter and in any case not *explaining* the supposed merger) is summarized by J. V. A. Fine Jr., *Sbornik Rad. Viz. Inst.* x (1967), 31 (and cf. H. Grégoire, *CRAI* 1946, 571, n. 1).

forgotten: hence the interchangeability of the terms *μέρη* and *δῆμοι*. Alas, this interchangeability is as early as the earliest attested application of either term to circus partisans. Our first evidence is the charioteer epigrams, where *δῆμος* / *δῆμοι* is used upwards of fifteen times, *μέρος* only twice¹—figures not easy to square with the hypothesis of an original distinction between *μέρος* and *δῆμος*, with *μέρος*, not *δῆμος*, as the circus term.

(7) Last, but not least in importance, the traditional view does not explain the most striking single thing about the factions of the early Byzantine period: their rivalry. ‘The organisation of the demes’, writes G. Ostrogorsky, ‘was the means whereby something of the traditional liberty of the ancient cities survived.’² According to L. Bréhier, the demes ‘se dressent comme les défenseurs du peuple’ against imperial officials.³ A similar judgement by Bury was quoted above. Yet if the demes really did represent a reaction of the people against imperial oppression, then this reaction took a curiously ineffective and self-defeating form. For the rivalry and violence of the Blues and Greens was almost invariably directed, not at the emperor and his representatives, but at each other. Such a situation must inevitably have proved a better safeguard for the power of the emperor than the liberty of the people.⁴

Further negative arguments will be unnecessary. It should by now be clear that the municipal deme theory cannot explain any of the phenomena it was invented to explain, and is flatly contradicted by all the surviving evidence and every consideration of probability. It would surely never have been put forward at all but for simple ignorance of late Greek usage on the part of its author and subsequent defenders. It is to this that we now turn.

The meaning of δῆμοι in late Greek

The linguistic issue is twofold: (i) the normal meaning of *δῆμος* / *δῆμοι* and its equivalence to *populus* / *populi* in Latin; (ii) how and in what meaning these terms came to be applied to circus partisans?

¹ *δῆμος*: *A. Plan.* 341.3; 344.4; 349.3; 351.6; 359.5; 360.3 etc. *μέρος*: *ibid.* 355.3; 374.5.

² *History of the Byzantine State*³ (1968), 67.

³ *Les Institutions de l'empire byzantin*² (1970), 162.

⁴ See p. 295.

(i) It does not appear to be generally known,¹ yet there can in fact be no serious doubt that the *normal* meaning of *δῆμοι* in late Greek is simply 'people'. It is an example of what grammarians call the 'particularizing plural'.² Properly speaking *ὁ δῆμος* denotes the people as a whole, *οἱ δῆμοι* its individual representatives,³ though in practice singular and plural were employed more or less interchangeably.

It is of course a common phenomenon with such collective nouns. As early as the fourth century B.C. we find *ὄχλοι* and *πλήθη* alongside *ὄχλος* and *πλήθος*, and the alternation between *λαός* and *λαοί* goes back to Homer. In the koine of the early Empire the standard term for 'the masses' was *οἱ ὄχλοι*.⁴ By the late Empire *οἱ δῆμοι* had taken over this role.

The same tendency is clearly observable in Latin. By the late Empire we find *turbæ* as well as *turba*, *plebes* no less than *plebs*, and (far outstripping *populus*) *populi*.⁵ *Populi* makes its first appearance in the spoken Latin of North Africa in the early Empire, and becomes increasingly common thereafter in all the western provinces.⁶ Right up to the fifth century it is virtually confined (in literature) to Christians, shunned as a vulgarism by secular writers, yet by the late Empire there seems little doubt that *populi* was the standard word in popular speech for 'people'—exactly parallel to late Greek *δῆμοι*.

δῆμος and *δῆμοι* sometimes refer to circus partisans, to be sure.

¹ In view of the crippling lack of indexes and lexica to the enormous bulk of early Byzantine literature (Sophocles and Lampe do not recognize this meaning at all, being content to take the demefaction equation for granted), it should go without saying that the following is a random (but not, I hope, wholly unrepresentative) collection of examples, mainly based on my own reading.

² e.g. Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik* (1965), p. 21, § 32.

³ I take this opportunity of drawing attention to the similar treatment in late Greek writers of the word *στράτος*. Within the space of 12 lines of the same fragment of John of Antioch (108, *Exc. de Ins.* p. 148) we find *εἰς τὸν στρατὸν Θράκης . . . ἐπεχείρουν οὖν οἱ στρατοὶ Θράκης . . . ἐβουλεύσαντο οὖν οἱ στρατοὶ . . . πρὸς τὸν στρατὸν*. The variation is no doubt partly due to stylistic reasons, but it is probably more than coincidental that in both cases where the plural is used the army is seen as an agent. Similarly we tend to find (e.g.) *εἰς τὸν δῆμον* but *οἱ δῆμοι ἐβόων*. Cf. too the common use of *οἱ σύγκλητοι* for *ὁ σύγκλητος*.

⁴ W. Bauer, *Wörterb. z. Schriften des Neuen Testaments*⁴ (1952), 1093.

⁵ F. Cramer, 'Was heisst Leute?', *ALL* vi (1889), 368f.—ignorance of which has led to some unfortunate misunderstandings in J. Duquesnay Adams's pretentious study *The Populus of Augustine and Jerome: a Study in the Patristic Sense of Community* (1971).

⁶ Cramer, pp. 351f.: *populi* is also the standard word for 'people' in Latin epic, though for a different reason (analogy with Greek *λαοί*).

So do *populus* and *populi*.¹ Yet outside certain formulae, and where there is no suggestion of the circus or its rivalries, both words, in singular and plural alike, always mean simply 'people', often (though not always) with the pejorative connotation 'mob'.

The precise equivalence of the two words in this sense can easily be illustrated. For example, τῶν κατὰ πόλιν δήμων in Sozomen,² *HE* i. 1 becomes *civitatum populis* in the Latin translation of Epiphanius (*Hist. Triph.* i.2). In 535 Justinian created the post of *praetor plebis*, in effect chief of police.³ In the Greek version of the relevant law (*Nov.* 13) this official is styled indifferently *πραιτωρ τοῦ δήμου* and *πραιτωρ τῶν δήμων*—just as in the Latin version we also find the variants *praetor populi* and *praetor populorum*. Note particularly the formal equation at *Nov.* 13.1.1: τῇ μὲν ἡμετέρῃ φωνῇ [= Latin] *praetores plebis* προσαγορευέσθωσαν, τῇ δὲ Ἑλλάδι ταύτῃ καὶ κοινῇ *πραιτωρες δήμων*. Even when (as here) there can be no question of the meaning 'circus faction', we regularly meet the same indifferent alternation between singular and plural.

The *Acta* of the Ecumenical Councils of the Church provide several further bilingual illustrations. For example, a letter of the Emperor Marcian to Pope Leo expressing the wish that the Christian faith be preserved 'omni populo', or *παρὰ πάντων τῶν δήμων* in the official contemporary translation.⁴ Another letter of Marcian hopes that 'omnis populus'—*πάντας τοὺς δήμους*—will observe the same teaching,⁵ while in a third *δήμων* represents Latin *populorum*.⁶ In a reply from Pope Leo it is *plebium* that becomes *δήμων*.⁷ In a letter from Pope Celestine to Nestorius

¹ Below, p. 40.

² According to Sozomen vii.9.2 it was argued at the Council of Chalcedon (381) that the see of Constantinople should have primacy after Rome because it had a senate, magistrates, and *τάγματα δήμων* like Rome. Naturally this has often been taken to refer to the 'deme-structure' of the city. But if this were so, it would also follow that Rome too had a 'deme-structure', which was certainly not the case (nor has anyone ever gone so far as to suggest it). There is no cause to read anything more into the phrase than 'the division of the citizens into ranks and orders' (tr. E. Walford, 1855).

³ Stein, *Bas-Empire* i (1949), 803-4; Jones, *Later Roman Empire* ii (1964), 692; cf. too Guillard, *Rev. des ét. sud-est europ.* viii (1969), 81-4.

⁴ *ACO* II.1.8.28.

⁵ *ACO* II.3.4102; II.1.336.17. Cf. 'cunctos populos' in *CJ* i.1.1 (of 380) and 'populos Christianae religionis', *ibid.* i.4.6 (of 398).

⁶ *ACO* II.1.479.17.

⁷ *ACO* II.1.255.18.

about the Council of Ephesus 'unde in populos haec episcopo praedicare?' becomes *πόθεν ἐπισκόπῳ ταῦτα εἰς δῆμους κηρύττειν*¹; Another bilingual example is provided by a sixth-century Latin version of Josephus: *δήμοις ὀμιλεῖν πιθανώτατος* ('very effective in addressing a crowd') appears as 'ad persuadendum *plebi* nimis idoneus'.²

There are several further cases in the Council *Acta* where there is no Latin version but the general meaning 'people' is none the less beyond dispute. Where Nestorius, for example, enjoins caution and piety *τοῖς ἡμετέροις δήμοις*.³

Early in the fifth century Palladius refers to an *ἄρχων τῶν δήμων*,⁴ evidently an imperial official and certainly nothing to do with circus partisans. Presumably (on the analogy of the Greek equivalents for *praetor plebis*) the *defensor civitatis*, a sort of judge of appeal designed as a champion of the lower orders and accordingly sometimes known as *defensor plebis*.⁵ There is another clear example of *δήμοι* = *plebs* a few pages earlier in Palladius.⁶

About the same time Socrates describes how *οἱ τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων δήμοι* rushed to punish some monks who had attacked a pagan prefect.⁷ Nearly a century earlier Athanasius had complained several times of outrages committed against the faithful by the *ἐθνικοὶ δήμοι* of Alexandria;⁸ from the way they are linked with 'Jews and other trouble-makers', evidently the 'pagan mob'.⁹

Much has been based on references to the 'demes', in

¹ *ACO* I.2.9.2.; I.1.79.20.

² *AJ* iv.14, cf. *The Latin Josephus*, ed. F. Blatt, i (1958), 263-7.

³ *ACO* I.2.52.2. When Cyril writes *θορυβησάντων δὲ πρὸς ταῦτα τῶν δήμων* at *ACO* I.6.26.4, it is an outcry of the people as a whole, not of circus partisans, that is in question.

⁴ *Dial.* 6, p. 36.27 Colcman-Norton. Cf. too from the late fourth century Hephaestio Thebanus, *Apol.*, ed. Pingree, i (1973), 72.12; 232.2.

⁵ So (verbally) J. R. Martindale, against R. Browning's *praefectus Augustalis* (*JRS* xlii (1952), 15, n. 53). For the *defensor plebis* see Jones, *Later Roman Empire* ii (1964), 727.

⁶ p. 29.22 (pseudo-priests *τοὺς δήμους γονυπετοῦντες*).

⁷ *HE* vii.14. Cf. *οἱ Ἀλεξανδρέων δήμοι* (again the masses, in 517) in Theodore Lector (*epit.*), §522, p. 151.15 Hansen.

⁸ *Epist. Enc. c. Ar.* 3; 4; *Apol. c. Ar.* 15; by a curious aberration, R. I. Frank, *Scholae Palatinae* (1969), 116-17, interprets these *ἐθνικοὶ δήμοι* as barbarian guardsmen (*gentiles*): against, A. H. M. Jones, *JRS* lx (1970), 227.

⁹ For the tenacity of paganism among the masses of Alexandria, see Amm. Marc. xxii.11.7.

Theophanes, on the assumption that in every case the factions are meant. A very insecure assumption. At p. 234.22, for example, where in 562 οἱ δῆμοι steal bread during a famine, this must surely be the hungry mob, not the well-heeled dandies who made up the bulk of the Blues and Greens.¹ At p. 289.12 ὁ τε πατριάρχης, οἱ δῆμοι τε καὶ ἡ σύγκλητος are mentioned in connection with the coronation of Phocas. Clear evidence, it might seem, that the factions were a constitutional power in the state on a par with the Senate. But as it happens we possess what was unquestionably Theophanes' source at this point, the history of Theophylact Simocatta. Simocatta has Senate, patriarch, and οἱ Βυζάντιοι λαοί (viii.10.2). Both writers mean no more than 'the people' of the city as a whole; no Byzantine would have been confused by Theophanes' substitution of the more everyday term δῆμοι. Compare again p. 283.16, where οἱ δῆμοι dress up an ass as the Emperor Maurice to insult him. A perfect example, it might seem, of a political demonstration by the factions. Yet here we have not only Simocatta (viii.4.1 ff.) but another version of the same incident by John of Antioch (frag. 107), both drawn upon by Theophanes. Neither mentions the factions. Indeed a careful comparison of the three accounts will reveal both that those responsible were what Simocatta styled ἀπὸ τοῦ πλήθους τινές and that (as in 562) they were the hungry poor protesting during a famine. Once more, hardly the factions. Then there is p. 299.7, where οἱ δῆμοι are said to have killed Phocas. Yet again Theophanes' source here, John of Antioch (frag. 110), says nothing of the factions. Certainly Theophanes sometimes uses δῆμοι to designate circus partisans, but it should be clear that it was by no means a technical term for him in this sense. On the contrary, it was a word he normally used quite generally—a word he was liable to substitute freely for the terminology of his sources. Obviously we ought to be very wary of reading factions into such references in Theophanes unless there is a clear pointer in the context.

Early in the fifth century Atticus patriarch of Constantinople explains to Cyril of Alexandria how he has been forced by popular pressure to consent to the rehabilitation of his deposed predecessor John Chrysostom. δῆμοι is simply one of several synonyms he used *varietatis causa* for 'the people': τοὺς λαούς . . .

¹ See below, p. 101.

τῶν δήμων . . . τοῖς λαοῖς . . . τοῖς λαοῖς . . . τὸν ὄχλον . . . τῶν λαῶν . . . τοῦ πλήθους.¹ According to Chrysostom himself, angels and princes are not the only δήμοι who get to heaven.²

Saint Basil draws into a sermon on those who court worldly fame the man who spends his wealth on wild-beast shows, ταῖς ματαίαις τῶν δήμων φωναῖς ἐπαγαλλόμενος.³ Lampe's *Patristic Lexicon* assumes the meaning 'circus faction' here, but the factions were not connected with wild-beast shows as early as the fourth century, and a more general reference (as elsewhere in Basil) is therefore indicated.⁴ Compare ποῖον γὰρ ἂν γένοιτο κέρδος ἐκ τῆς τῶν δήμων εὐφημίας; in a similar sermon of Chrysostom.⁵ Even in the famous passage of Procopius (*BP* i.24.2), οἱ δήμοι ἐν πόλει ἐκάστη ἕς τε Βενέτους ἐκ παλαιοῦ καὶ Πρασίνους διήρηντο, it should be obvious that οἱ δήμοι has a general reference. The precision is given by ἕς τε Βενέτους . . . καὶ Πρασίνους, as confirmed by the back reference to this very passage in the *Secret History* (vii.1): τοῦ δὲ δήμου ἐκ παλαιοῦ ἐξ μοίρας δύο διεστηκότος, ὥσπερ μοι ἐν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν ἐρρήθη.

Our best evidence for the use of δῆμος / δήμοι to refer to the circus colours is the epigrams from the sixth-century charioteer monuments. Consider ἀμφοτέρω δήμοι at *Anth. Plan.* 351.6 and 376.1; δῆμος ὁ τῶν Βενέτων at 344.4 (cf. 359.5); δῆμος Πρασίνων at 354.4, 49.5, and in one of the prose inscriptions from one of Porphyrius' monuments.

On the other hand, the statue of Julian was put up by

αὐτὸς ἄναξ καὶ δῆμος ἅπας καὶ πότνια βουλή

(45.3).

Coupled as it is with the emperor and Senate, and qualified by ἅπας, δῆμος here must surely mean 'the people' in general. Similarly the posthumous monument to Constantine was put up

¹ Cyril Alex., *Ep.* lxxv (*PG* lxxvii.349D).

² *Sur l'incompréhensibilité de dieu*, ed. J. Daniélou (*Sources chrét.* 28 bis), 1970), iv.101.

³ *Hom. in Ps.* 61, *PG* xxix. 477A. At Colluthus 218, Ἀθηναίης ἀπὸ δήμων (Livrea's elaborate new commentary has no note: δήμου has—of course—been conjectured), 'people' would be possible, though in the circumstances a 'learned' allusion to the Attic demes seems more likely.

⁴ Cf. τοὺς τοιούτους δήμους at *Hom. 4.1 in Hexaem.* (*PG* xxix. 80A) and the other example quoted below, p. 37.

⁵ *De Anna sermo* iii. 4 (*PG* liv. 658).

by δῆμος καὶ βασιλεύς (43.6), δῆμος ἅπας (367.3) and (at 366.3) by just δῆμος. Compare too 336.1, τέτραχα . . . ἴαχε δῆμος, where all four colours chanting separately¹ are described collectively as δῆμος.

So it would seem that in this of all contexts, epigrams solely devoted to the performers and spectators of the hippodrome, δῆμος can still be used in its normal, more general sense. What clearer proof could there be that it was not a rigid technical term in the restricted sense of 'circus partisan'. We may compare also a line from Amphilochius of Iconium's attack on the circus (c. 390):² πόλεις διασπᾶ, δῆμον εἰς στάσεις φέρει, where once more δῆμος is used in a purely general sense in a context wholly concerned with the excesses of circus partisans.

How early the plural of δῆμος which has so misled scholars came into general use in the sense 'people' is difficult to say. The earliest certain examples I have been able to trace occur in Josephus, that is to say late in the first century A.D.: e.g. *AJ* iv.14 (quoted above), and *BJ* iv.621, where τὸ πρόθυμον τῶν δῆμων means (as Thackeray translates) 'popular enthusiasm'.

After this a clear case in Appian, around the middle of the second century: τῶν δῆμων αἰεὶ τοὺς δαφιλεῖς ἐπαινούντων, 'the mob always praises the generous' (*BC* ii.1), said of the young Julius Caesar's extravagant bids for popular favour. Mendelssohn unnecessarily conjectured δημοτῶν for δῆμων. Then we have an example in Lucian: δῆμοις παραπτομένοις ἐμμελῶς διελέχθη, 'he has talked reason to excited mobs'.³ A couple in Aelius Aristides: e.g. ἐν κόλακος μοίρα τοῖς δῆμοις ὀμιλεῖν, 'to curry favour with the masses'.⁴ And a couple more in Philostratus, most clearly πάντες οἱ ἐκεῖνη δῆμοι at *V. Apoll.* viii.26, which a new translation mistakenly renders 'all the cities there'.⁵ But the reference is to the growing number of people in Rome who have heard of Domitian's death: 'now ten thousand believe it, now twice as many . . . now twice as many as that,

¹ See p. 50.

² *Iambi ad Seleucum* 153 (ed. E. Oberg, *Patr. Texte u. Studien* 9, 1969).

³ *Demon.* 9, with Harmon's Loeb translation.

⁴ *Or.* xlvi, ii.166.3 Dindorf; cf. xlv, ii.146.2, and W. Schmid, *Der Atticismus*, ii.93.

⁵ C. P. Jones's otherwise excellent version in the Penguin Classics (1970): cf. too *Vit. Soph.* 519 (ii.32.13 Kayser), παρῆει δὲ καὶ ἐς τοὺς δῆμους meaning to the agora or somewhere similar. The sense of τῶν τῆς θαλάττης δῆμων at *Gymn.* 44 (ii.285.27) is obscure and δῆμων perhaps corrupt: see van Herwerden, *Lexic. suppl.* s.v. δῆμος.

now four times as many, now πάντες οἱ ἐκείνη δῆμοι—evidently ‘all the *people* there’, that is to say all the inhabitants of Rome.¹

No doubt the usage is considerably earlier than these first literary examples which happen to have come down to us. But it can hardly have been common before (say) the first century (it is absent, for example, from the New Testament, where ὄχλοι fills this role)². Its continuing rarity can be adequately accounted for by the intense conservatism and linguistic purism of early imperial Greek prose. It remained rare even after the fourth century except in the more popular Greek of the sermons and chronicles. Indeed, a large number of classicizing writers continued to shun it for the vulgarism it evidently was right down into the seventh century and beyond. For the same reason *populi* was excluded from most formal secular prose in Latin down to the sixth century, being as widely attested as it is before then only because Latin-speaking Christians wrote their language so much less stylishly than their Greek colleagues.

Exponents of the traditional view have always assumed that δῆμος-derivatives such as δημότης and δημοτικός were likewise used in the specialized sense they attribute to δῆμος/-οι itself. Consequently a phrase such as στάσεως δημοτικῆς γενομένης³ is automatically taken as a direct reference to a battle between or involving the factions. Since the factions were seldom far away when there were street battles in sixth-century Constantinople, the assumption may often in practice be correct. Yet at (for example) Justinian, *Nov.* xiii.4.1, δημοτικοὶ θόρυβοι are just disturbances of the people in general, ‘populares turbæ’ in the

¹ In a number of apparent examples in Dio (some so interpreted by his editor Boissevain), there is always a contrast with individuals, and the meaning ‘community’ (always common) seems more appropriate: xxxviii.17.5 (Cicero’s connections in Sicily entitled him to respect ἐν τε τοῖς δήμοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ιδιώταις), cf. xlv.53.3; lxii.18.5; lxix.5.1; lxxiv.8.4; lxxvii.9.3; and Boissevain’s note on lv.12.4 (ii, p. 497). Cf. Kaibel, *Epigr. Gr.* 609.1 (Robert, *REG* 1936, 239, n. 5), τὴν πολλοῖς δῆμοισι πάρος, πολλὰς δὲ πόλεσσι . . ., of the fame of a third-century mime actress, where ‘partisans’ cannot be excluded but ‘peoples’ seems more likely.

² E. L. Hicks, ‘On Some Political Terms Employed in the New Testament’, *CR* i (1887), 42; J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the New Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources* (1930), 144-5.

³ *Chron. Pasch.* 695.5.

Latin version. Compare another Latin text written in sixth-century Constantinople, Marcellinus' *Chronicle* sub anno 491: 'bellum plebeium inter Byzantios ortum, parsque urbis plurima atque circi igne combusta'. If Marcellinus had a Greek source here, we may be sure that the original of 'bellum plebeium' was δημοτική μάχη. And the mention of the circus suggests that the 'war' did indeed involve the factions. But the phrase δημοτική μάχη need in itself have no more specialized a meaning than 'bellum plebeium' in Latin: a civilian (rather than a military) conflict. τὸ δημοτικόν is a stock formula for 'the people' as distinguished from (say) the Senate or clergy.¹

The same applies to δημότης. It should hardly be necessary to point out that it is one of the standard words in koine (as indeed classical) Greek for 'one of the people' as opposed to 'a man of rank' (*LSJ*). To the examples quoted by *LSJ* add (purely *exempli gratia*) several cases from Dio where οἱ δημόται are regularly distinguished from senators and equites.² It is Herodian's normal term for the common people.³ Indeed, it is only in an Attic context that the word ever means anything else.⁴

In the *Book of Ceremonies* (and elsewhere where the context makes the reference plain) δημότης undoubtedly does designate individual members of the Blues and Greens.⁵ The chroniclers will often refer to οἱ δημόται τοῦ Πρασίνου (*Βενέτου*) μέρους.⁶ Yet outside such contexts there is no sign that it had become a technical term in this sense. Even so late a text as the mid-seventh-century *Life of Symeon the Fool* by Leontius of Neapolis

¹ Sozomen, *HE* iv.7.1; *Das Leben des Heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontius von Neapolis*, ed. L. Rydén (1963), p. 155.1; 164.9. T. E. Gregory ('Zosimus v.23 and the people of Constantinople', *Byz.* xliii (1973), 61f.) rightly denies on general grounds that οἱ δημοτικοί in Zos. v.18 refers to the factions. His study of Zosimus' terms for 'the people' reveals that, like many purists, Zosimus never uses δῆμος in the plural.

² xlvi.49.1 (τῶν τε βουλευτῶν καὶ τῶν ἰππέων τῶν τε δημοτῶν τῶν εὐπόρων); lix.8.3; lx.15.6; lxiv.6.3.

³ ii.4.1; ii.6.3; ii.6.13; iii.1.3 etc. (Note for example) τῶν ἀρχόντων καὶ τῶν δημοτῶν in Fronto, *Epp. gr.* 5.1 (i.270 Haines).

⁴ As remarked by I. C. Cunningham, *Herodas: Mimiambi* (1971), 87.

⁵ e.g. *De Caer.* 617.12, where δημόται are expressly contrasted with πολῖται.

⁶ Malalas, *Frag.* 51, *Exc. de Ins.* p. 176.10; *Chron. Pasch.* 712.15; Nicephorus, p. 4.15; 14.25 de Boor; note particularly Simocatta's reference to an ἀνὴρ δημότης ἐπίσημος of the Greens in 601 (viii.9.13), and Theodore Balsamon's commentary on the twenty-fourth canon of the Quinisext Council, *PG* cxxxvii. 596A (see p. 18).

uses the word frequently and exclusively in the more general sense.¹

A recent study by E. Wipszycka has collected all the examples of *δημότης* and *πρωτοδημότης* in papyri (thirteen from the fourth to seventh centuries).² She admits that in a number of cases the simple meaning 'citizen'³ is not only possible but probable. Yet she also argues (or rather assumes) that 'dans plusieurs textes, ce mot désigne des personnes liés aux factions du cirque'. There are indeed one or two texts where *δημότης* might seem to imply someone more important than a simple citizen, but the point here is surely that the word is used, not because it is especially honorific, but to distinguish the men in question from on the one hand the curials of their city (*βουλευταί, πολιτευόμενοι*), and on the other from mere villagers (*κωμηταί*). Lists of tax receipts regularly distinguish between magistrates, citizens, and villagers⁴—a very necessary distinction in the case (say) of an absentee landlord officially resident (for tax purposes) in a city and so anxious to avoid being called upon for local liturgies while visiting his estates. It seems likely that *δήμος* and its derivatives always imply residence in a city. In a letter to the magistrates of Nicopolis Saint Basil draws a sharp distinction between *τοῖς δήμοις* and *τοῖς ἐνοικοῦσι τὴν χώραν*,⁵ the implication being that *δήμοι* could not have been applied to country or village dwellers. In the *Life* of Symeon Stylites the Younger, a *δημότης* is contrasted with a *ξένος*.⁶ It is suggestive too that

¹ pp. 147.14; 151.12; 152.2; 163.16; 164.6 ed. Rydén (1963) (p. 36, n. 1 above). In his *Bemerkungen zum Leben des Heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontius* (1970), 94-5, Rydén has shown that in Leontius *δημότης* has pejorative associations not present in *πολίτης*. *δημόται* are the sort of people who dance in public places and get nice girls into trouble. He compares the *δημότης* of *V. Sym. Styl. le jeune* (ed. van den Ven, *Subsid. Hag.* 32, 1962), 164.22f. who was put in prison for making *στάσεις πολλὰς ἐν ταῖς δημοτικαῖς ταραχαῖς*. There is no suggestion in the context that he is a circus partisan, nor is he a member of the *plebs infima*, for he turns out to be a landowner and redeems himself with good works.

² 'Les Factions du cirque et les biens ecclésiastiques dans un papyrus égyptien', *Byzantion* xxxix (1969), 180-98.

³ So Preisigke, *Wörterbuch*, s.v. *δημότης*, though his explanation, 'dessen stand aus der alten Demenverfassung herrührt' is quite mistaken. There is no evidence that demes were introduced into Egyptian cities as a whole after the municipalization of the province.

⁴ A. E. R. Boak and H. C. Youtie, *The Archive of Aurelius Isidorus* (1960), 76-7. Cf. the particularly clear distinction between the *δημόται* and *πολιτευόμενοι* of a city in Frisk, *Bankakten* 4, quoted by Wipszycka, p. 194.

⁵ *Ep.* 230.

⁶ *V. Sym. Styl. le jeune* (ed. van den Ven), 165.4-6.

Procopius can refer to the city prefecture of Constantinople as ἡ τοῦ δήμου ἀρχή or ἡ τῶν δήμων ἐφεστῶσα ἀρχή.¹ So the use of δημότης in papyri to mean townsman is natural enough.

Nor do we need to invoke the circus factions to explain πρωτοδημότης. It means, as the commentators on *Pap. Oxy.* 2480.18 (565/6) rightly say: 'the leading men of the place'. 'Nous connaissons', objects Wipszycka, 'assez bien la vie des villes dans l'Égypte byzantine pour être sûrs que "the leading men of the place" étaient les membres de la curie, qui s'appellent dans les textes régulièrement βουλευταί ου πολιτευόμενοι.'² Not at all. The most striking single phenomenon in the evolution of late Roman city life is precisely the supersession of the curials by a much more select group of the wealthy and otherwise influential, the πρωτεύοντες.³ Village life underwent a similar evolution. Instead of the appointed κωμάρχαι, by the sixth century we find a κοινόν of πρωτοκωμηταί.⁴ If δημότης means 'ordinary citizen', then what can πρωτοδημότης mean against such a background but 'leading citizen', one of the grandees who had come to supplant the former curials?

In any case, not one of these texts so much as hints at the colours or rivalries of the circus. Granted the central importance of these rivalries, it is hard to believe that any Blue or Green partisan would have added a bare δημότης after his name when witnessing a document (as on several of the papyri in question). He would inevitably have styled himself δημότης τῶν Βενέτων, or Πρασίνων.⁵

¹ *Anecd.* 28.10; 20.7; 20.13; 1f. 20.1; E. Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 803.

² *op. cit.* 193.

³ D. Claude, *Die byz. Stadt* (1969), 156 ('An die Stelle der verschwundenen oder entmachteten Kurien war ein rechtlich nicht festumrissener Personenkreis wohlhabender Bürger getreten . . .'), and for the fourth century, A. F. Norman, *JRS* xlviii (1958), 83-4.

⁴ P. Jouguet, *La Vie municipale dans l'Égypte romaine* (1911), 393-4; cf. A. C. West and L. C. Johnson, *Byzantine Egypt: Economic Studies* (1949), 326.

⁵ In any case a mere rank-and-file δημότης of a faction would be of no especial consequence. *Pap. Merton* ii.95 (5c.), which connects a πρωτοδημότης with some Arabian archers, Wipszycka refers to the supposed military functions of the demes. Quite apart from the fact that these military functions have been grossly exaggerated (Ch. IV), the 'Arabian archers', for all their warlike name, are only in fact attested as performing the most pacific of police duties (see the material collected in the commentary to *Pap. Merton* i.29). But I agree with Wipszycka that nothing can be made of the occurrence of δημότης in a tenth-century hagiographic text discussed by G. Schirò, 'Un significato sconosciuto di δημότης', *Riv. di cult. class. e med.* vii (1965), 1006-16; on this see too now L. Rydén, *Bemerkungen zum Leben Symeon* . . . (1970), 94-5.

The moral is plain. *δημος* and its derivatives *can* refer to circus partisans in a circus context. But otherwise they normally do not.

The populus of the partisans

So far our findings have been mainly negative: many texts invoked by earlier scholars to build up their picture of the character and activity of the factions probably do not refer to the factions at all. But there remain a number of texts where the *δημος* complex *does* refer to the factions, on occasions explicitly distinguishing them from the citizen body as a whole. In what sense are the words used in this context? How and when did they come to be applied to circus partisans? There is a real problem here, as yet unappreciated though fortunately susceptible of a straightforward solution.

Even if we reject (as we must) the 'municipal demes' of the Byzantine cities, might not the application of *δημος* in its normal general sense still imply something about the social and even political character of the factions?

Take A. Maricq's valuable study of 1950.¹ After dismissing the municipal demes and coming within hailing distance of the truth in a discussion of the *δημος/ποπυλι* equation, he ended by accepting all the social and political implications of the traditional view, interpreting *δημοι* as 'partis populares'.² Then there is the Marxist historian G. L. Kourbatov, who has recently seen the municipal demes for the absurd anachronism they are, but still maintains that the *δημοι* of the circus were 'grands partis politiques', filling a vacuum left by a supposed breakdown of the traditional *entente* between *βουλή* and *δημος* in the Greek cities of the fourth century.³

In a more down-to-earth discussion J. R. Martindale has argued—though without explaining how it came about—that it was not till the early seventh century that the *δημος* words began to be used of circus factions at all.⁴ In this he is certainly

¹ *BARB* xxxvi (1950), 396–421.

² So too H.-G. Beck, *BZ* lix (1966), 440.

³ 'Le terme *δημος* dans les oeuvres de Libanius et la question des *δημοι* byzantines', *Congrès International des Orientalistes* i (Moscow 1962), 1–11. He did not realize that it was for linguistic, not social reasons that Libanius never uses the term *δημοι* (cf. p. 44, n.3).

⁴ 'Public Disorders in the Late Roman Empire' (1960), 67.

mistaken. There are many indisputable examples in the charioteer epigrams of c. 500,¹ and it is probably mere chance that we have no earlier case. For it is possible to quote a Latin parallel for virtually every formula in which *δήμος* / *δήμοι*, with or without *μέρος*, are applied to the factions by Byzantine writers.

'*Populus Prasinianorum*' at *SHA Verus* vi.6 is the exact equivalent of *δήμος Πρασίνων* in the charioteer epigrams and later chroniclers. The *HA* itself dates from (probably) the late fourth century, but derives at this point from an early third-century source.² 'Felix *populus Veneti*' on an early fourth-century inscription from Carthage³ precisely parallels the standard later formula *δήμος Βενέτου* (p. 16). Cassidorus refers to '*populus partis Prasini*' at *Variae* i.27.2 (= *δήμος τοῦ Πρασίνου μέρους*), and at i.20.2 to their *populi* (= *δήμοι*).⁴

The Latin equivalent to *δημότης* is *popularis*, a convenient formation from *populus* (as *δημότης* is from *δήμος*) to designate individual partisans. Callistratus, a jurist of the early third century, refers disapprovingly to certain people 'qui volgo se iuvenes appellant'⁵ (that is to say, wrongfully claim to be one of the exclusive young men's athletic associations)⁶ so that they can join 'turbulentis . . . adclamationibus *popularium*'. The implication is that these unofficial (and evidently lower-class) fan clubs ought not properly to be counted as *populares*. The *populares*, then, are official fan clubs. *SHA Probus* xix.5 describes an occasion when thousands of wild beasts were released in the circus, to be followed by the *populares*, who were allowed to catch what they wanted. Hardly *carte blanche* for the 200,000-odd spectators to rush into the arena; more probably the few hundred officially recognized partisans. Then there is Ulpian, who records police measures 'ad tuendam popularium quietem' at public spectacles.⁷ Again, more probably the rowdy partisans than the spectators as a whole. According to Cyprian Pope

¹ See p. 33 above.

² Probably Marius Maximus: cf. *JRS* lxi (1971), 262f.

³ *I. Lat. Afr.* 385; cf. Picard, *CRAI* 1964, 115f.

⁴ And for the *populi* of the factions cf. too Luxorius, *Anth. Lat.* i.1.306.2 and 327.1.

⁵ *Dig.* xlviii.19.28.3.

⁶ Thus far at least I would follow W. O. Moeller, 'The riot of A.D. 59 at Pompeii', *Historia* xix (1970), 89.

⁷ *Dig.* i.12.1.12.

Cornelius was often 'ad leonem petitus in circo . . . clamore popularium'.¹ The more general meaning 'people' cannot perhaps be excluded in these as in a few other legal texts,² but *populares* is in fact extremely rare in this sense.³

Now quite apart from the fact that many of these Latin examples are centuries earlier than the earliest Greek examples on record, it seems hardly conceivable on purely *a priori* grounds that Latin practice could have been influenced by Greek here.⁴ The reverse is incomparably more likely.

It is well known that Greeks dealt with Roman official terminology in three ways:⁵ either they adapted an existing Greek term (*δήμαρχος* for tribune); or they devised a new Greek equivalent (*ὑπάτος* for consul); or they just transliterated (*κοιαίστωρ* for quaestor). Sporting terminology was treated the same way: *venator* became *κυνηγός*, *gladiator* *μονομάχος*; but *retiarius* just *ρήτιάριος*.⁶ Though Greek before it became Roman, chariot racing reached the cities of the eastern provinces in a thoroughly Romanized form.⁷ The colours of the Roman circus were transplanted direct to Constantinople and Alexandria and (much later) to other eastern cities. The *Prasi(ni)ani* and *Venetiani* of the early Empire became *Πρασίανοι* and *Βενετίανοι*, and the shorter forms *Prasini* and *Veneti* that later prevailed appear straightforwardly as *Πράσινοι* and *Βένετοι*.

Small wonder then that less formal terms such as *populus* or (later and more vulgarly) *populi Prasinorum*, referring to the fans, appear in Greek dress *tout court* as *δήμος* or (later and more vulgarly) *δήμοι Πρασίνων*. So whatever the significance of

¹ *Epp.* lix.6.1.

² *Dig.* xlix.1.12; *Cod. Just.* i.28.2 (371); 1 *Cod. Just.* i.28.4 (391).

³ A few archaic examples and a few more in Tertullian and Dictys Cretensis are all Cramer quotes in *ALL* vi (1889), 396. Add a few more from Gradenwitz's index to *Cod. Theod.*

⁴ It is always a delicate matter to determine the direct influence of Greek on Latin, much less of Latin on Greek. In many apparent cases a more probable explanation, as Löfstedt in particular has shown (*Syntactica* ii (1933), Ch. xiv), is parallel development of the two languages. The vulgar use of the plural in both *δήμος* and *populus* is obviously to be explained in these terms, but clearly *not* their common specialized application to circus partisans.

⁵ D. Magie, *De Romanorum iuris publici sacrique vocabulis sollemnibus in graecum sermonem conversis* (Diss. Halle 1904); and cf. too G. Vrind, *De Cassii Dionis vocabulis quae ad ius publicum pertinent* (Diss. Leiden 1923).

⁶ L. Robert, *Les Gladiateurs dans l'orient grec* (1940), 39 (and *passim*) for the whole range of Greek equivalents for gladiatorial terminology.

⁷ See pp. 201 f.

referring to fans as the 'people' of the Blues or Greens, whether at a social, political, or merely linguistic level, it is not a Byzantine innovation. It goes right back to Rome of the Principate.

Our problem is thus shifted back a stage. Why call circus fans a *populus*? It would seem on the face of it that the word is being used in a specialized sense: 'company', 'association', 'members'. Yet none of the Lexica were able to parallel such a meaning. Nor did illumination come even from the files of the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*.¹ Then an inspiration suggested a search among the abundant surviving records of similar if more serious associations, the inscriptions of the Roman guilds (*collegia*). The search was immediately rewarded. *populus* turns out to be the standard term for the 'members' of a guild; sometimes opposed to and sometimes including the guild officials (*decuriones*)²—a double sense likewise borne by the term 'members' in modern associations. *populus Prasinianorum*, *populus Veneti*, are exactly paralleled by the formula *populus collegi*.³ And where there is no need for the defining genitive, where the context makes the specialized meaning clear, *populus* alone naturally sufficed. For example, the committee that prepares accounts for members are 'qui . . . rationem *populo* reddere debebunt'.⁴

'Dans leur organisation', remarked Waltzing in his great work on the Roman guilds, 'les collèges avaient pris pour modèle la cité'.⁵ And if the guilds, like the cities, each had their *decuriones* and *populus*, what more natural than that, when the partisans of the circus began to organize themselves on a more regular basis, they too should have followed the same model? In the early days of the principate the personnel of the faction proper (the professionals) was divided up into the *familia* (slaves), and the freedmen *decuriones* who superintended them.⁶

¹ Kindly excerpted for me by Ursula Keudel.

² J.-P. Waltzing, *Étude historique sur les corporations professionnelles* i (1895), 358, n.1, 366; cf. too W. Liebenam, *Zur Gesch. u. Organisation des röm. Vereinswesens* (1890), 182, n.3.

³ *CIL* vi.8744; vi.10234.1; vi.344.11.

⁴ *CIL* xiv.2112.I.27; vi.10351; vi.10234.11-12.

⁵ *Étude historique* i (1895), 357-8.

⁶ *ILS* 5312-3: Maricq (*BARB* xxxvi (1950), 399, had already seen that it was unnecessary to suppose (with, e.g., Dar.-Saglio, i.1199) that these *decuriones* each had a regular *decuria*, i.e. 10 slaves, under his command.

No doubt the partisans too had some *decuriones*, though (as we have seen) no officials of any sort are mentioned before the seventh century¹ and they cannot have been of much importance. But we hear often of their *populus*, their 'company' or simply 'members'. The *populi* of later writers merely reflects the vulgar tendency to the particularizing plural in this word.

When the need arose to transpose the expression into Greek, *δήμος* was the obvious choice, because, in addition to a general equivalence of meaning, it had long borne the sense 'band' or 'company' as well. To the examples quoted in *LSJ*² we may add a series of texts where even in this meaning we find the same alternation between singular and plural that has caused so many misunderstandings.³ The carefully classicizing Libanius writes *δήμος ειδώλων*,⁴ meaning the company of spirits who inhabit the lower world; Themistius has *δήμος ἀγαθῶν δαιμόνων*, for the spirits of the upper world.⁵ John Chrysostom too, who can write very correctly when he chooses, has *ὁ τῶν ἀγγέλων δήμος*.⁶ Yet Theodoret refers to *τῶν ἀγγέλων οἱ δήμοι*⁷, the hymnode Romanos to *ἀσωμάτων* [angels again] *οἱ δήμοι*.⁸ Chrysostom⁹ and Simocatta¹⁰ have *δήμοι μαρτύρων*. Christians were called the *δήμοι* of God by the Emperor Constantine I,¹¹ the *δήμοι* of Christ by Basil of Seleuceia;¹² Jews the *Ἰουδαίων δήμοι* by Cyril of Alexandria¹³ (with which we may compare the Latin equivalent 'populi Iudaeorum' in a rescript of 399¹⁴); the

¹ See pp. 20, 258f. ² s.v. *δήμος*, II.2.

³ Many examples could also be quoted from Latin texts: e.g. Augustine, *Civ. Dei* xvi.4, where the Devil builds the tower of Babel 'cum suis populis' (misunderstood by Adams, *The Populus of Augustine* (1971), 42).

⁴ *Orat.* lxi.18 (iv, p. 338.18 Foerster).

⁵ *Orat.* xx.234c (ii, p. 4.5 Downey-Norman). Add an earlier example from Philostratus, *Imag.* 357.23K, *ταῦτα αἱ Νύμφαι πανσυδί, σὺ δὲ κατὰ δήμους αὐτὰς ὄρα*, where it is clear from what follows that κ.δ. = 'in their individual bands'.

⁶ *PG* lxi.413; *Huit catéchèses baptismales inédites*, ed. A. Wenger (1957), iii.8.4; vii.18.10.

⁷ *Quaest. in Dt.* xlii (*PG* lxxx.446B).

⁸ P. Maas, *Frühbyz. Kirchenpoesie*² (1931), no. 7.6.

⁹ *Hom.* 12.4 in *Rom.*; cf. too John, *Sur l'incompréhensibilité de dieu* (*Sources chrét.* 28 bis, 1970), ii.280, *ἄπειροι δήμοι ἀσωμάτων δυναμέων*.

¹⁰ iv.16.10.

¹¹ *Ap.* Eusebius, *V. Const.* ii.71.

¹² *Orat.* 27.1 (*PG* lxxxv.312A).

¹³ *ACO* I.2.96.12; I.6.38.10.

¹⁴ *Cod. Theod.* xvi.8.14; cf. 'Iudaeorum populus', *ibid.* xvi.8.20 (412).

poor, *δῆμοι πενήτων* by Gregory of Nyssa.¹ Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, describes Babylon as *ἀνόμων τρέφουσα δῆμους*, 'the lawless'.² Evidently all are using *δῆμοι* in the same sense—'company'—as Libanius, an exact parallel to the alternation between *δῆμος Πρασίνων* and *δῆμοι Πρασίνων* (*Βενέτων κτλ.*).

For the sake of brevity *οἱ δῆμοι τῶν Πρασίνων* is often shortened to just *οἱ δῆμοι*. It might have seemed that this would be indistinguishable from *οἱ δῆμοι* in its more common general sense: the people, the masses. In practice the context will always have made it sufficiently clear (to contemporaries at least) which sense was intended.³ It is a well-established philological fact that even the commonest words can bear quite different specialized meanings in different contexts.

So the so-called 'demes' of the Blues and Greens are a myth. It would be best if so misleading a term could simply be dropped in the future. They are not residential areas or municipal units; they are not either the population as a whole or the common people; they are not even anything new. Nothing more than the members of the Blue and Green fan clubs.

¹ *De Paup. Amand.* 1, ed. A. van Heck (1964), p. 13.2.

² *Anacreontica*, ed. M. Gigante, 1957, no. xviii.8; cf. xiv.88, where the Persian conqueror of Jerusalem *μερόπων ἔτεμνε δῆμους* ('tutti i mortali', rightly Gigante).

³ It may be more than coincidence that, while Libanius seems never to use *δῆμοι* meaning just 'people', he does use it twice with reference to theatre audiences: *Or.* lxiv (*pro Salt.*) 108, 112. So too Choricus, *Apol. Mim.* 118 (p. 371 Foerster-Richsteig).

III. The Colours

I

APART from a short-lived reform of Domitian,¹ there had always been four factions in the circuses and hippodromes of the Roman Empire: Reds, Whites, Blues, and Greens. But by the late Empire we hear almost exclusively of Blues and Greens. And not only this: our sources speak of ἀμφότερα, ἐκάτερα, τὰ δύο μέρη, as though only two colours now existed—Blue and Green.

Not unnaturally, it has often been assumed or implied that Reds and Whites disappeared altogether. This is certainly not so. Right up till at least the twelfth century there was always a Red and White team in every race, and no doubt they often won. This much is clear from Christopher of Mytilene's charming poem 'For those away in the country on race day', and its less lively imitation by Michael Hagiotheodorites.² Both have reached us incomplete, so that we do not know who won, but in both races Red and White were in with a fighting chance up to the moment the text peters out. Here are just a few lines of Christopher's undeservedly neglected eleventh-century sports report:³

οἱ τεσσάρων ἤλαυνον ἵππεῖς ἀρμάτων,
πρῶτα Πράσινος, εἶτα Λευκὸς ἀντίκα
καὶ δὴ μετ' αὐτοῦς 'Ρούσιος, καὶ 'Ρουσίου
ὁ Βένετος σύνεγγυς ἠνιο(στρόφος) . . .

A century earlier we read constantly of Reds and Whites and of the four competing teams in the meticulously detailed hippodrome ceremonies chronicled for us by Constantine Porphyrogenitus.⁴

¹ Suetonius, *Dom.* 7.1 and Dio, *lxxvii.4.* mention his Purple and Gold; Martial, *xiv.55.2* and *ILS 5282* the Purple alone.

² Michael's poem was published by K. Horna in *Wiener Studien* xxviii (1906), 193-8; the first 6 lines date it laboriously to 1 February, 1168.

³ E. Kurtz, *Die Gedichte des Christophoros Mitylenaios* (1903), no. 90.70f.

⁴ *De Caer.* i.68-73 and *passim.*

How then do we explain this paradox? Most scholars have evidently considered it irrelevant to the 'problem' of the factions as they see it. Manojlović alone both considered it and proposed a solution, one with wide implications. He postulated two entirely different organizations: the mere 'sporting associations' that existed to cheer on the *four* teams in the hippodrome, and the *two* (as he thought) social, political, and religious parties that divided the entire population of Constantinople. 'S'il agit uniquement de jeux et de spectateurs', he wrote,¹ 'apparaissent, non pas deux noms, mais les quatre noms des quatre couleurs des corporations sportives.' That is to say, whenever we find Reds and Whites mentioned together with Blues and Greens, all four colours, these are just the fans who cheer on their respective teams in the hippodrome. But when we read of the Blues and Greens alone doing things *outside* the hippodrome, whether defending the walls of the city in a moment of crisis or (more frequently) simply causing trouble, these are something else altogether: two massive political parties, organized on a regional basis with officially recognised and elected leaders—far removed from the frivolities of the race-track.

I do not accept this distinction between sporting associations and political parties. It can (I believe) be proved beyond question that the Blues and Greens who roamed the streets, defended the walls, and (occasionally) proclaimed the emperors of Constantinople, were none other than the Blues and Greens who sat with the Reds and Whites in the hippodrome.

Manojlović was certainly on the right lines (if not completely right) in claiming that when we do hear of Reds and Whites, it is a 'sporting context', in connection with the regular activities of the hippodrome. A. H. M. Jones, for example, referred to the occasion in 490 when Longinus (the brother of Zeno) presented new dancers to each of the four factions (*εἰς τὰ τέσσαρα μέρη*) as one of the last references to the two minor colours.² Manojlović had already seen that Reds and Whites are mentioned here because it is a 'sporting context'. If we hear little of them after 490 (outside the charioteer epigrams, which both Manojlović and Jones neglected), this is only because our sources concen-

¹ *Byzantion* xi (1936), 638.

² *Later Roman Empire* iii (1964), 337, n.72.

trate on the extra-hippodrome activities of the two major colours.

But the converse of Manojlović's assumption—that references to just the two colours are to the political parties—is quite false. Let us consider his interpretation of a passage in the *Chronicon Paschale*,¹ where the Emperor Heraclius is described as leaving the city to parley with the Khagan of the Avars accompanied by 'officials, landowners, clerics and even guildsmen and demesmen of each faction (δημόται ἐξ ἑκατέρου μέρους)'. Despite the fact that the party attended a race-meeting at Heraclea, Manojlović will not allow that these 'demesmen of each faction' are just members of the circus factions. They accompany Heraclius, he maintains, in their capacity as urban militiamen; for if a reference to the circus factions had been intended, 'il aurait fallu parler de quatre factions, et non pas de deux'.² We shall see in Ch. VI that this distinction between the demes *qua* circus factions and the demes *qua* militiamen is untenable. And in this particular case, it can further be objected that *urban* militiamen, whose only military function was to defend the city walls in the event of a siege, would hardly have been selected to guard the emperor on an embassy outside the city. Naturally, the emperor will have been protected by his regular guards regiments (p. 114). The factions went along, as we shall see (p. 257), to lead the ceremonial with which Heraclius was intending to impress the Khagan at Heraclea.

So Manojlović's case rests here entirely on his assumption about the number of colours mentioned. Yet it is by no means the case that all four colours *must* be mentioned in sporting contexts. Indeed, it is more usual for the Blues and Greens alone to be singled out in this sphere as in others.

For example, once Porphyrius had won a statue each from Greens and Blues, he had

εἰκόνα χαλκείην δήμῳ ἐν ἀμφοτέρῳ.³

Uranus won the same honour, and is duly described as having statues δήμου ἀπ' ἀμφοτέροιο,⁴ and cf. too *A. Plan.* 376.1–2:

ἀμφοτέροισι εἰς μῶνος ἀριστεύσεως παρὰ δήμοις,
κῦδος ἀπ' ἀμφοτέρων ἔλλαχεν Οὐράνιος.

¹ p. 172.12f. Bonn.

² op. cit., p. 632.

⁴ *A. Plan.* 351.6.

³ *A. Pal.* xv.49.3.

On the monument of Constantine we read of the rivalry of the *two* factions for his services:

πολλάκι δ' ἀμφοτέρων μέρεων ἔρις ἔμπεσε δήμῳ,
 τίς μιν ἔχοι. κείνῳ δὲ δόσαν κρίσιν ἐκ δύο πέπλων
 (374.5-6).

The factions united to pay their last respects to Constantine: but the only ones named are

οἱ Βένετοι Πρασίνουσιον ἐναντίοι αἰὲν ἔόντες (368.1).

Again no mention of Reds and Whites.

Indeed, the only colours actually mentioned (fifteen times) in the charioteer epigrams are Blue and Green. The statues the epigrams commemorate were put up either by the people as a whole or by one or other of the Blues and Greens. From ecphrastic epigrams of a much later date we discover that pictures of the top charioteers of each of the four colours *c.* 500 were painted on the ceiling of one of the apartments in the Kathisma.¹ The Red and White drivers (Julian and Constantine) were known to us already from the epigrams originally inscribed on their statue bases, where there is no reference to their colours. Some epigrams from Porphyrius monuments do allude to the Reds and Whites, but only obliquely and without naming them. For example, the following epigram, which has yet to be properly interpreted:²

Τέτραχα μὲν τὸ πάροιθε διακριδὸν ἴαχε δῆμος,
 τὸν Καλχαντιάδην Πορφύριον ποθέων
 αὐτὰρ ὁ δεξιτεροῖσιν ἀνακτορέοιο θούκου
 ἡγία καὶ ζώνην ἵππότιν ἀνθέμενος,
 κεῖθεν ἐπισπέρχων ἐλάα . . .

Paton translates line 1:³ 'Four times before did the people shout distinctly', explaining in a note: 'This apparently means that the people had clamoured for him during previous races in which he took no part.' But would this really be sufficiently striking to be worth recording on a statue? Beckby paraphrases in similar fashion:⁴ 'Four times the people declared their longing . . .' We must be more precise. *τέτραχα* means, not 'four times', but 'in four parts'. Curiously enough, the new *Supple-*

¹ *A. Plan.* 380-7: see *Porphyrius*, pp. 200f.

² *A. Plan.* 336.1-5.

³ Loeb edition, note ad loc.

⁴ Tusculum edition, note and loc.

ment to Liddell-Scott-Jones goes out of its way to add a new section to the original entry: 'b. four times'—citing this very passage as its only support. Presumably it was thought that the nicety of the distinction between *τέτραχα* and *τετράκις* was beyond a Byzantine, so it will not be irrelevant to draw attention to a number of other later texts where the meaning 'in four parts' is certain. First a second-century inscription from Pergamum:¹

τέτραχα μὲν διακρεῖναι ἐφ' ἡ[γ]ητήρας ἅπαντας . . .
καὶ πίσυρας στιχάδεσσι ἐφ' ἡγεμονῆ[ας] ὀπάσαι,

which is exactly paralleled by *τέτραχα τεμνομένην στρατήν* in Nonnus.² Then Gregory Nazianzen³ (of a cruciform church):

ἔδος Χριστοῦ μαθητῶν
πλευραῖς σταυροτύποις τέτραχα τεμνόμενον,

with which compare two further examples in Paul the Silentary's description of Hagia Sophia.⁴ Lastly Agathias, who describes how the four sons of Clovis *διενείμαντο τέτραχα τὴν βασιλείαν*⁵. The fourfold division of the Frankish kingdom is a historical fact.

We must also be more precise about *διακριδόν*. Although it can mean 'clearly', a much commoner meaning, especially in late Greek poetry, is 'separately'. Cf. Nonnus again,⁶ *ἔστιχον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα διακριδόν*, and Agathias once more, *λέβητας . . . διακριδόν ἔστησε πολλαχοῦ τοῦ δωματίου*⁷ and (especially) a few lines earlier in the same poem of Gregory Nazianzen:⁸

διακριδόν ἴστατο λαός
μύθων ἡμετέρων εἰσαίειν ποθέων.

The parallelism between Gregory and our epigram is so striking, especially coupled with their common (proper) use of the rare *τέτραχα*, as strongly to suggest that the author of the epigram was familiar with Gregory's poem. If so (and even if not) we can hardly doubt that he was using *διακριδόν* in the same sense as Gregory.

¹ Kaibel, *Epig. Gr.* 1035.14f.

² *Dion.* xxvii.148; cf. ii.248 and xxxiii.63.

³ *Carmen* ii.1.16.60-1.

⁴ *Ephr.* 453, 471 (P. Friedlaender, *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentarius* (1912), p. 240).

⁵ *Hist.* i.3.2.

⁶ *Dion.* xxxiv.349.

⁷ *Hist.* v.7.3.

⁸ ii.1.16.21-2.

We may now return to the first couplet of the epigram, which, with the addition of two commas, will at last yield an acceptable sense:

Τέτραχα μὲν, τὸ πάροιθε διακριδὸν, ἴαχε δῆμος
τὸν Καλχαντιάδην Πορφύριον ποθέων.

‘In four parts [i.e. from the four benches of the four factions] the people shouted in their longing for Porphyrius, the people who formerly had shouted separately.’ The best commentary comes in a newly published poem of Theodore Prodromus, describing how the factions performed their ‘paeans’ for John II Comnenus in 1133, divided into four groups according to colour:¹ τέτραχα δ’ ἐκ στολάων μεμερισμένοι ἔσσαν ἐκεῖνοι, Λευκῶν Φοινίκων τε Κυανῶν τε Πρασίνων τε. The point of the epigram is that while formerly the factions had each cheered separately for their own drivers (Reds for the Red driver, Greens for Green, and so on), now all four cheer together for Porphyrius in the hope that he will drive for them. But he cannot drive for all four: so he takes up his reins and yoke-strap (ἡνία καὶ ζώνην ἰππότιν) on the right of the imperial throne (δεξιτεροῖσιν ἀνακτορέσιο θωώκου).

After much earlier hesitation and debate scholars now seem agreed (and rightly so) that the Kathisma, where the Emperor sat surrounded by his entourage, was located on the south-east side of the hippodrome, facing the benches of the Blues and Greens and directly opposite the Greens.² Now two other epigrams from the same monument as the epigram we have been discussing make it clear that it was put up by the Blues. So if Porphyrius picked up his gear on the right of the emperor, he would indeed have been facing the Blues—striking (but overlooked) confirmation of the topographers’ conclusions about the layout of the hippodrome.

Compare now the following epigram³ from the same monument—that is to say a monument from the Blues describing how Porphyrius was always changing teams with his fellow charioteers and still defeating them effortlessly in the ‘day-long contests’:

¹ Theodoros Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, ed. W. Hörandner (1974), vi. 150-1.

² See A. Piganiol, *Byzantion* xi (1936), 383f., confirmed and developed by R. Guiland, *BS* xviii (1957), 39-76 (= *Études topogr.* i (1969), 462f).

³ *A. Plan.* 337.

ὄς καὶ εὐὸς ἵππους καὶ ὁμόφρονος ἠνιοχῆος
 ἔξ ἐτέρων ἐτέρους αἰὲν ἀμειβόμενος,
 πολλάκι κράτα πύκασσε πανημερίοισιν ἀέθλοις,
 οὐ μογέων, ἐτάρου μῦνον ἐφέσπομένου.

'It was the practice', wrote the Loeb editor in his note, 'for a victorious charioteer to change his team with another of his own faction and to race him. This was called a "diversium".' Vasiliev corrected him, pointing out that according to the chapter *περὶ διβερσίου* in Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the victorious charioteer exchanged his team with a member of the *opposing* faction.

This is certainly what the *diversium*¹ was, and we have a clear description of it in two other epigrams. First 340:

πολλάκι νικήσας γὰρ εὐὸς πόρεν ὠκέας ἵππους,
 λάξετο δ' ἀντιπάλων, καὶ πάλιν ἐστέφετο.

(340.3-4)

Porphyrius wins first, then changes teams with the 'enemy' (*ἀντιπάλων*) and wins again. One of the prose inscriptions on the same monument explicitly uses the word *διβέρσια*. Then there is *A. Pal.* 374, where Constantine wins twenty-five times in the morning, 'changed horses with his rivals' and then won another twenty-one victories.

But what Vasiliev did not notice is that in 337 Porphyrius does *not* exchange his team with an *ἀντίπαλος*, 'rival', but with a *ὁμόφρων*, 'like-minded' charioteer, who is referred to again in the last line as a *ἕταρος*, 'comrade'. Compare too 47, from a different monument, where we hear that

νῦν μὲν ἐὼν πρῶτος, τότε δ' ἔσχατος, ἄλλοτε μέσσος,
 πάντας ὁμοῦ νίκησε καὶ ἀντιπάλους καὶ ἑταίρους.²

There is no exchanging of teams here, but a clear distinction is drawn between two classes of charioteers defeated by Porphyrius: *ἀντίπαλοι* and *ἑταιροί*, 'rivals' and 'comrades'.

The clearest explanation of these terms is provided by the description of a chariot-race in the twenty-third poem of Sidonius (307-427), perhaps the liveliest and most successful passage in the whole of Sidonius' dreary *œuvre*. The race in

¹ *Porphyrius*, p. 209.

² *A. Pal.* xv.47.5-6.

question took place at Ravenna around the middle of the fifth century, and the poem was written in Gaul between 462 and 466.

Sidonius' friend Consentius, the subject of the poem, selects his chariot by lot, as too do both his 'colleague' and the 'opposite faction' (*pars*):

id *collega* tuus, simulque vobis
pars adversa facit; micant colores,
 albus vel venetus, virens rubensque.

(322-4)

By lines 362-3 Consentius' 'colleague' has overtaken the other two, while Consentius himself is last:

fit *collega* tuus prior duobus
 qui te transierant.

Lines 363-9 exactly explain line 5 of epigram 47. Consentius is driving in the outside track, and

curae est id *mediis*, ut ille *primus* . . .
 curru praetereatur intus acto.

The 'medii' are those on the two middle tracks, who hope to overtake the 'primus', the man on the inside track, on the left, and take over his position. Cf. now *A. Pal.* 47.5 again:

νῦν μὲν ἐὼν πρῶτος, τότε δ' ἔσχατος, ἄλλοτε μέσσος.

πρῶτος = *primus* = the driver on the inside track; μέσσος = *medii* = those on one or other of the two inside tracks;¹ and plainly ἔσχατος refers to the outside track. Porphyrius can win *whichever* of the four tracks the lot gives him.

At lines 387f. in Sidonius' poem we hear again of the 'pars contraria', who are then split up into 'hic' and 'alter'.

All is now clear. The race is not between four independent drivers, but two teams of two. Consentius had his 'collega' just as Porphyrius had his ἑταρος, ἑταιρος or ὁμόφρων ἠνιοχεύς, and the two of them race against the other pair, collectively the 'pars adversa' or ἀντίπαλοι. The ἑταιροί are evidently the Reds and the Whites. The phenomenon described in *A. Plan* 377 is a

¹ The two middle positions were properly known as μεσοδέξιος and μεσαρίστερος (Guilland, *BS* xxv (1964), 241).

variant on the *diversium* proper, in which the victorious driver exchanges teams with his ἔρανος, his co-driver. As we shall see, this partnership between 'major' and 'minor' colours can be abundantly illustrated from the *Book of Ceremonies*.

So far, then, from a reference to two rather than four colours distinguishing the political from the sporting side of the factions, this diversity of reference in fact springs directly from the sporting side. There is no more basis here than anywhere else for Manojlović's attempt to distinguish between the 'mere' sporting fraternities and the political parties.

If there is a distinction to be drawn, it is the one established in Ch. I, between the professionals and the partisans. Justin I, for example, 'punished many from *both* the factions and banished the *four* dancers of the factions'¹. Corippus too writes of the four colours being divided into two *partes*.² The dancers are professionals, and since in the competitions of theatre and hippodrome there were always four teams, naturally there were four dancers. But the partisans fall into only two parties, those favouring the two most important colours, Blue and Green. Since it was the partisans, not the professionals, who caused the trouble, naturally it is these two groups of partisans that we hear most about, not the four professional bodies.

II

How and when is it that the Blues and Greens attained this pre-eminence over the other colours? On the traditional view, when the original sporting associations turned into political parties, four was too many. The social, economic, political, and religious tensions that divided the people naturally tended to divide them into two camps, not four. The pre-eminence of the Blues and Greens reflects this polarity.

Possible, even plausible though this view might seem, there is a serious objection. The pre-eminence of the Blues and Greens is *not* a development of the later Empire, when the factions are supposed to have taken on these social, political, and religious roles. It can be traced back to the early Principate. Indeed it is

¹ frag. 39, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 168.32.

² *Laud. Just.* i.319-20.

already present in the earliest evidence we have for the very existence of the Blues and Greens.

For example, whenever we hear of the factional preferences of an emperor, from as early as the Julio-Claudians it is always either for the Blues (Vitellius, Caracalla)¹ or the Greens (Gaius, Nero, Domitian, Verus, Commodus, Elagabalus).² That the omission of Red and White here is not just fortuitous seems proved by the case of Marcus. When giving thanks for his escape from the partisanships of the circus, he expressed it by saying, quite simply, that he had been 'neither Blue nor Green.'³ Galen remarks that 'the partisans of the Blues and Greens' went so far as to smell the dung of their horses so as to make sure they were getting the right diet.⁴ When suggesting topics for conversation at a dinner party, it is the Blues and Greens again that Martial singles out to represent chariot racing.⁵

Particularly interesting is the following anonymous epigram from the *Palatine Anthology* (xi.344):

*Μητροδότος στυγέων Πρασίνων αἰώνιον ἄχθος
μνημοσύνην μίσους τήνδε τράπεζαν ἔχει.*

'On Metrodotus the Blue who had a green table', explains the lemmatist. That is to say, being himself a Blue, Metrodotus so hated the Greens that he kept a Green table as a perpetual reminder! Jacobs ascribed the poem to Palladas, that is to late-fourth-century Alexandria; Beckby, the latest editor of the *Anthology*, assumes a reference to the factions of Constantinople. Yet its position at the head of a clearly marked if brief alphabetical sequence points unmistakably to the *Garland* of Philip of Thessalonica.⁶ Philip's *Garland* was published under Gaius or

¹ Suetonius, *Vit.* 7; Dio, lxxv.5.1; lxxvii.10.2.

² Gaius: Suet., *Calig.* 55, Dio, lix. 14; Nero: Suet., *Nero* 22, Dio, lxxiii.6, Pliny, *NH* xxxiii. 90; Domitian, Martial, xi. 33; Verus: see next note; Commodus, *HA Comm.* 2.9; Elagabalus: Dio, lxxx.14.2.

³ *Med.* i.5. Malalas' claim that Marcus was a Green (rashly accepted by Bratianu, *BZ* xxxviii (1947), 99) is no doubt a confusion with his brother and co-Emperor Verus, who was an ardent Green (cf. T. D. Barnes, *JRS* lvii (1967), 70, on *HA Ver.* 4.8, 6.2-3.)

⁴ *De methodo medendi*, x.478 Kühn.

⁵ x.48.23.

⁶ Omitted without comment by A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page from their *Garland of Philip* (1968), though mentioned with a query by R. Weisshäupl, *Die Grabgedichte d. griech. Anthologie* (Abh. Arch. Semin. Wien vii, 1889), p. 20. F. Lenzinger, *Zur griech. Anthologie* (1965), 23, marks off xi.344-8 without comment as 'ein Stück aus

Nero,¹ though much of the material it embodied had been written earlier, some of it in late Republican times. So as early as the first decades of the Empire circus rivalry could be represented as something essentially between Blues and Greens.

According to Dio, Caracalla put to death a man who favoured, not a different, but the *opposite* (τάναντία) colour to himself.² Whichever faction Caracalla favoured, his brother Geta would support 'the opposite' (τὸ ἐναντίον).³ Elsewhere in Dio the Greens are contrasted with their 'antipartisans'.⁴ Then we have Theodoret's account of the reaction of the people assembled in the circus to Constantius II's attempt in 357 to foist a second pope on them.⁵ They observed sarcastically that since the spectators were divided into two according to the colours from which they took their names, the old pope could rule one party and the new one the other!

No less illuminating is the story of Fabricius Veiento's attempt to get the *domini factionum* to lower their prices.⁶ The Reds and Whites gave way as soon as Fabricius began training his dogs, but the Blues and Greens continued to hold out, and eventually Nero saved the day by providing the prizes himself. The Blues and Greens were evidently made of sterner stuff—or had larger resources and better connections behind them.

More generally, a straightforward count of the references to the four colours in the early imperial writers who mention them most—Suetonius, Martial, Dio—will reveal that Blues and Greens are mentioned far more often.⁷ Indeed, Reds and Whites

dem Philipposkranz' (Gow and Page include only xi.346–8), and cf. too E. Hirsch, 'Zum Kranz des Philippos', *Wiss. Zeit. Univ. Halle* xv (1966), 414. The only reasonable objection is that 345 would be the only hexametric epigram in the *Garland*; but hexametric epigrams were normal by the second century (Wilstrand, *Von Kallimachos zu Nonnos* (1933), 156f.), and the odd Neronian precursor should scarcely astonish.

¹ Against Gow and Page (*Garland of Philip* i (1968), xlvii, cf. ii, 116, 119–20) I still see no good reason to doubt that *A. Pal.* ix.178 (certainly Neronian) was included in the *Garland* (cf. *GRBS* ix (1968), 323, n.2). The arguments for publication under Gaius are assembled by Gow and Page, i, xlvf.

² lxxviii.1.2—i.e. the Greens, since Caracalla was a fanatical Blue.

³ Dio, lxxvii.7.2; cf. Herodian, iv.4.1.

⁴ Dio, lxxiv.4.2.

⁵ *Hist. Eccl.* ii.10.6.

⁶ See p. 6.

⁷ Suetonius mentions Blues and Greens alone (*Nero* 22.1; *Vit.* 7; 14); Martial Blues and Greens alone at x.48.23, xiii.78.2, xi.33, vi.46.1, adding Red to xiv.131.1 only for the purpose of a joke; Dio has Blues and/or Greens alone at lix.14.6, lxiii.6.3, lxxv.5.1, lxxii.17.1, lxxiii.4.1, lxxvii.10.2, lxxviii.8.2, lxxix.14.2, adding Reds and Whites too at lxi.6.2 because he is referring to the actual stables.

are scarcely named in the literary sources. It is otherwise with the non-literary sources, the inscriptions and curse tablets, where there is frequent reference to Reds and Whites. But there is a simple explanation for this. The literary sources deal mainly with the partisans, while the inscriptions and curse tablets record only the professionals.¹ In other words, the situation was really very much as under the late Empire. Each of the four factions had its charioteers, grooms, doctors, and the like, but the *fans* tended² to divide into just two parties: Blues and Greens.

III

According to Tertullian, there were at first only two colours, Red and White.³ This statement has given rise to an unwarranted and improbable yet universally accepted assumption that the Blues and Greens did not come into existence till the beginning of the Principate.⁴

The elder Pliny records that at the funeral of a Red charioteer called Felix in the 70s B.C. one of his supporters threw himself on the pyre, though the rival supporters claimed that he had merely been intoxicated by the aroma of burning spices.⁵ It has been argued that Pliny's phrase 'adversis studiis' ought properly to imply only one rival party⁶—namely, the Whites. Even if true, this would prove nothing about the Blues and Greens. For it could well be that, just as Metrodotus the Blue counted the Greens rather than either Reds or Whites as his enemies, so would a White hate Reds rather than Blues or Greens. This mutual hostility served as well as any other bond to link the factions in two pairs: it will be remembered that the Blues and Greens pursued a different policy from the Reds and Whites during the Fabricius Veiento affair. Thus the fact (if it be so)

¹ The Red allusion at Juvenal, vi.198, is to a performer.

² Nevertheless, Red and White fans did continue to exist: see pp. 72–3 below.

³ *De Spectaculis* 9.5.

⁴ e.g. Friedlaender, *SG* ii¹⁰ 34; Pollack, *PW* s.v. *factiones*, 1955 and countless lesser and derivative works. So too even the sensible Balsdon, *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome* (1969), 314, and H. A. Harris, *Sport in Greece and Rome* (1972), 194.

⁵ *NH* vii.186: 'invenitur in actis, Felice russei auriga elato, in rogam eius unum e faventibus iecisse se, frivolum dictu, ne hoc gloriae artificis daretur, adversis studiis copia odorum corruptum criminantibus'.

⁶ Friedlaender, in Marquardt/Wissowa, *Röm. Staatsverwaltung* iii² (1885), 517, n.6.

that only the Whites went to jccr at the funeral of a Red charioteer need not mean that the Blues and Greens did not exist c. 77 B.C., when the incident took place.

When Ovid, at the races with a new girlfriend in the 20s B.C.¹ writes

evolat admissis *discolor* agmen equis,

we are told that two colours—Reds and Whites—would be enough to justify the epithet *discolor*. Perhaps, but four would be better.

A famous passage of Ennius, with a change of one letter, offers an interesting early parallel:²

expectant veluti, consul cum mittere signum
volt, omnes avidi spectant ad carceris oras
quam mox emittat *pictis* e faucibus currus.

Could it be that Ennius really wrote *pictos*?³ By a bold anachronism he introduced into the age of Romulus a simile drawn directly from the circus of his own day, complete with the presiding consul, the technical term *mittere*⁴ and the chariots painted in the colours of the factions.

Even so, of course, *picti currus* need not number four rather than two. But why not four, even as early as Ennius' day? For when Tertullian says that 'in the beginning' there were only two colours, the beginning he refers to, as is clear from the context, is the reign of *Romulus*, whom he credits with the introduction of chariot-racing into Rome. Why need we assume that the Blues

¹ *Amores* ii.2.

² 84-6 Vahlen.

³ When I put my emendation to Otto Skutsch, he told me that it was already embodied in his forthcoming commentary on the *Annals*, following a similar suggestion made to him many years ago by Frank Brown. L. Valmaggi, *Riv. di Fil.* xxvi (1889), 114-17, argued that Ennius was referring to painted wooden *carceres*, replaced by stone ones in 174 B.C. There may be something in this, though (despite E. M. Stuart, *The Annals of Q. Ennius* (1925), 117) neither Livy viii.20.1 nor xli.27.6 lends any support. The real objection to *pictis* is that, to judge from extant representations, *carceres* were *not* normally painted, whereas the chariots certainly were. Balsdon's reference (*Life and Leisure*, p. 253) to the 'richly painted *carceres*' is presumably influenced by *pictis* in this passage, though he cites only Varro, *De Ling. Lat.* v.153, which describes how they were decorated with towers and pinnacles, earning themselves the name 'oppidum' in early times. This does not suggest 'rich painting'.

⁴ Cf. Martial, xii.28.9; Suetonius, *Nero* 22.2; Tertullian, *De Spect.* 16.3.

and Greens were introduced by Augustus rather than (say) Servius Tullius?

It has been much debated whether Tertullian drew the major part of his information in this chapter of *De Spectaculis* from a lost book of Varro or a lost book of Suetonius (both of whom Tertullian quotes).¹ The latest contribution concedes that some details come from Varro—but not this one, because (it is assumed) the Greens and Blues did not exist in Varro's day.² Obviously this is not a dispute that can ever be settled one way or the other, nor for our present purpose does it much matter. But there is perhaps another and more fruitful approach.

If the Blues and Greens really did only come into existence between Varro and the reign of Gaius (when the Greens are first firmly attested), one would have expected Suetonius to record *who* had introduced them—and when. If Tertullian had had this information, he would have used it. He would have held the idolater up for the abomination of his readers, just as in his next chapter he curses Pompey for building the first permanent theatre. Yet in his circus chapter he has no name more recent than Romulus for ammunition.

Suetonius' *Ludicra Historia* is lost, but his *vitae Caesarum* are not. We do not know which he wrote first,³ but the latter work certainly reflects an informed interest in the history of public entertainments. His chapters on the contributions and innovations of Augustus in this field are particularly full and detailed, confirmed on many points by Augustus' own list in the *Res Gestae*.⁴ It seems to me that if the Blues and Greens really had been introduced in the century between Varro and the reign of Gaius, or even in the half-century or so before Varro wrote, more precise information would have reached Suetonius and, via Suetonius, the later tradition.

Tertullian's version is in fact a unique branch of this tradition.

¹ See now the full discussion in E. Castorina's edition (*Bibl. di studi super.* xlvii, 1961), lxxxiiif.

² *Ibid.* lxxxiiif., and 209.

³ Not even the *vitae Caesarum* can be pinned down as closely as one might have wished: see G. W. Bowersock, *Hommages M. Renard* i (1969), 119f. For the *Ludicra Historia*, see A. Reifferscheid's edition (1860), 322–45, 461f., with J. Taillardat's edition of the Byzantine fragments of *περι βλασφημιῶν* and *περι παιδιῶν* (1967), 28f. Taillardat shows that these works were not part of the *Lud. Hist.*, but independent treatises written originally in Greek.

⁴ *Aug.* 43–5; cf. *Res Gestae* 22–3.

Another version (preserved by Malalas)¹ credits Romulus with all four factions, and Cassiodorus' version implies the same.² John the Lydian has a curious intermediary version in which Reds, Whites, and Greens were original, and only the Blues late-comers.³ Even supposing (what is not self-evident) that Tertullian's version is to be preferred, there is in addition the semi-mythical quality of *all* versions, all of which also trace the four colours back to the four basic elements (see p. 64) and/or the four seasons (see p. 337). The unanimity of the tradition here suggests that these mythical/mystical speculations and the uncertainty about the original number of the colours goes back to Suetonius, the main (if not the only) source of most of the later tradition.⁴ If so, then it is hardly likely that what gave rise to it was a venture by equestrian businessmen in the first century A.D.

We may contrast the history of gladiatorial combats, where there was no such mystery. Nicolaus of Damascus wrote in Augustan Rome a sound historical account of their introduction from Etruria and their originally private character.⁵ Tertullian (no doubt via Varro or Suetonius) was well aware of their original connection with funerals.⁶ It was quite otherwise with the colours of the circus. The best that Roman antiquarianism and Greek subtlety combined could come up with was myth and fancy. Not even the gods to whom the colours were said to be sacred derive from a genuine early tradition. It is for astronomical and astrological reasons that Mars (for example) was held patron of the Reds—and even he sometimes turns up as a Blue.⁷ There is a similar lack of consistency about the relationship of the other colours to their patron deities.

I would suggest then that (whether or not Reds and Whites came first) all four colours go back well into the days of the Republic. How far back nobody knew—not even Varro. Astrological fancies were probably already current then, though

¹ p. 175 Bonn. ² *Variæ* iii.51.

³ *De Mens.* iv.25.3-5. ⁴ Castorina, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxix.

⁵ Quoted by Athenaeus, iv.39, pp. 153f. (the chapter is a collection of Greek comments and speculations on gladiatorial combats); see J. Heurgon, *Recherches sur l'histoire, la religion et la civilisation de Capoue préromaine* (1942), 430f.

⁶ *De Spect.* 12.

⁷ P. Wuilleumier, *MEFR* xlv (1927), 195f.; cf. too G. M. A. Hanfmann, *The Season Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks* i (1951), 160f.

fancies is perhaps the wrong word, since they served a very practical purpose in dealings between circus astrologers (first mentioned by Cicero)¹ and their clients. The colours themselves probably go back much further than the factions as we find them in the first century A.D., just as gladiatorial combats are much older than the professional gladiatorial schools we first hear of in the second century B.C.² There seems no reason to doubt that chariot-racing itself went right back to the period of the kings.³

There is perhaps just a chance that something lies behind John the Lydian's derivation of the *tribunus voluptatum* (the official in charge of public entertainments in John's day) from the three original tribes of Rome.⁴ For, John says, these three *tribuni* used to superintend the races in the days when only three chariots competed, Reds, Whites, and Greens. Now it might well be that John simply inferred a connection with the games for Romulus' *tribuni* from the duties of the *tribunus voluptatum*—the sort of etymological and aetiological game he often plays elsewhere. Yet it seems unlikely that John himself would have coolly reduced the traditional number of the colours to three for this reason alone. And while there is (of course) no possibility of a link between Romulus' *tribuni* and the *tribunus voluptatum*, the notion that the leaders of Romulus' tribes (who are never otherwise named) were called *tribuni* is plausible enough in itself (though again perhaps just a guess). Furthermore, though John himself suggests no more plausible reason for the addition of a fourth colour than equality with the number of the elements, there is in fact (as G. Dumézil was quick to see)⁵ a perfectly adequate, even attractive explanation in John's own terms: the

¹ *De div.* i.123, where Pease's commentary quotes most of the relevant texts (Horace, *Sat.* i.6.113-14; Juvenal, vi.582f.; Livy, xxxix.16.8). Cicero quotes from Ennius (*Telamo*, fr.cxxxv b Jocelyn), and there is a possibility that 'Isiaci coniectores' and the reference to astrologers reproduce the substance if not the words of Ennius, thereby taking circus astrologers back another century; see M. S. Salem, *JRS* xxxviii (1938), 56-9, criticized by H. D. Jocelyn, *Tragedies of Ennius* (1967), p. 397. It was presumably in the circus itself (when possible) that curse tablets were buried: see *Miracula SS Cosmae et Damiani* 11 (L. Deubner, *Kosmas und Damian* (1907), 122f.).

² Balsdon, *Life and Leisure*, pp. 291f.

³ A. Boethius and J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Etruscan and Roman Architecture* (1970), 63, 94.

⁴ *De mens.* iv.25.

⁵ *Rituel Indo-Européens à Rome* (1954), 55.

supersession of the three original tribes by the four urban tribes traditionally ascribed to Servius Tullius. That these three original colours reflect, as Dumézil supposed, the tripartite division of our Indo-European forebears into priests, warriors, and producers¹ is naturally a hypothesis of a rather different order, fortunately beyond the scope of the present work. But the possibility that John has salvaged (here as elsewhere) a genuinely early tradition, to the effect that the colours originally represented the tribes of regal Rome, should not perhaps be rejected out of hand.

On the usual assumption of the late origin of the Blues and Greens it was necessary to assume that they came to outshine the Reds and Whites almost overnight. Possible, of course, like all things—but not very likely. We can now allow a much longer period for the Blues and Greens to establish their ascendancy in popular favour.

IV

What now of the pairing of the major and minor colours? Is this at least a Byzantine development, or does it too go back to the early Empire?

It is certainly not an innovation of Constantinople. Our earliest direct evidence comes from middle imperial Africa. There is a series of curse tablets,² usually dated to the third or fourth century, many of which invoke the powers of evil against the horses and charioteers of two factions together. One might have expected to meet the odd tablet where all colours but the curser's own were cursed, but in fact this never happens. At Carthage the pairing is mentioned quite explicitly: 'Dionysus the Blue and his team-mate (σύνζυγος) Protus'.³ Here we have the unexpected phenomenon of Blue and Green racing in concert, though another Carthaginian tablet presents us with the more conventional union of Red and Green.⁴ At Hadrumetum only sixty miles away we find Green and White paired off.⁵

Then there is a mosaic found at Carthage in 1960 which shows 100-odd horses, mostly with Blue favours but a few with Red;

¹ Op. cit., pp. 45-61; on the general point see (briefly) A. Momigliano, *JRS* liii (1963), 113-14, though Dumézil himself would probably no longer press this particular argument.

² The fullest edition is A. Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* (1904).

³ Audollent, 234.25 (cf. 5).

⁴ *Ibid.* 237.

⁵ 286.

none with Green or White.¹ Even the gods depicted are chosen for their supposed factional sympathies, and represented in appropriate colours.

It would seem that the alignment of the colours was not yet uniform all over the Empire—or indeed within a single area. It is suggestive that when announcing Anastasius' affection for the Reds, Malalas says that he favoured the Reds in Constantinople, while persecuting the Blues and Greens everywhere.² The implication is perhaps that while Blues and Greens were the same everywhere, the status and allegiance of the minor colours might vary from city to city.

For Rome there is no firm evidence before a fourth- or fifth-century cache of curse tablets. But there may be something in the fact that when Gaius, a notorious Green supporter, gave grander than usual games in the circus, he had it decorated in red and green.³ The green will certainly have been a consequence of his partisanship, since we have it on the authority of an eye-witness that Nero, another fanatical Green, used to have the arena strewn with the same green substance, gold-solder (*chrysocolle*), before giving a display himself 'wearing a coat of the same colour'.⁴ A Gaius who (according to Dio) was not above poisoning rival horses and even charioteers⁵ would hardly have included red in his *décor* had he counted the Reds among those rivals.

Apart from one dubious link between Red and Green, the Roman curse tablets reveal only one firm pairing: Green and White, leaving an opposition of Blue and Red.⁶ An implicit parallel to these pairings for Rome is provided by the famous opus sectile wall mosaic from the Basilica of Junius Bassus, cos. 331. On each side behind the consul standing in his chariot are two horsemen in appropriately coloured jackets, Red and Blue to the left, Green and White to the right. That there is some significance in this arrangement is confirmed by the second row of figures in front of the consul (now vanished, but known from an early sketch), in the reverse order: White and Green to the

¹ L. Foucher, *Hadrumentum* (1964), 163, b.550; G. Picard, *CRAI* 1964, 114-15.

² p. 393 Bonn. ³ Suetonius, *Calig.* 18.

⁴ Pliny, *NH* xxxiii.90. ⁵ Dio, lix.14.5.

⁶ Audollent, 160; for the Roman tablets see too the excellent edition and commentary of R. Wuensch, *Sethianische Verfluchungstafeln* (1891).

left, Blue and Red to the right.¹ The superior status of Blue and Green is proved not just by the fact that in both rows it is they who are shown next to the consul, but also by the way the Blue and Green figures in the bottom row stretch out a hand to their Red and White colleagues.

Perhaps we may also draw into this connection a puzzling phrase in the inscription of the Red charioteer Diocles. Among his 1,462 victories are recorded 91 won 'ad albatum', 10 'ad venetum' and (in the *biga*) 1 'ad albatum' and 2 'ad prasinum'.² For nearly a century now everyone has accepted Friedlaender's theory that these are dead heats with the other colour named.³ Yet can we really credit 104 dead heats, 1 in every 14 of Diocles' victories? Compare the breakdown in §111 of the victories he 'eripuit et vicit', that is to say 'snatched at the last moment'. He won this way 216 times from the Greens, 205 times from the Blues and 81 times from the Whites, the implication being what we might in any case have expected, that the hottest competition came from the Blues and Greens. Yet we are asked to believe that (not counting two out of his only six victories in the *biga*) he never once dead-heated with a Green. Add to this the extra information supplied in the inscription that two of the 91 victories 'ad venetum' were for purses of 30,000 sesterces. Now had they been dead heats it would be natural for Diocles to have shared the prize money with the other winner. Yet the wording of the inscription clearly implies that he won the 30,000 outright for himself.⁴

What then are these victories 'ad venetum'? From a purely linguistic point of view 'against the Blues' might seem the answer,⁵ though why single out victories won against just one

¹ Coloured illustration in *Encicl. Arte Antica* iii (1960), 928-9 and R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Rome: the Late Empire* (1971), 96-7. The second row of figures are known from P. S. Bartoli's watercolour, now in Windsor Castle. Maricq interprets the mounted partisans as trumpeters greeting the consul on his entry into the circus, and the standing and kneeling figures as picking up the *missilia*, largesses, that he is distributing (*BARB* xxxvi (1950), 416, n.1).

² *ILS* 5287.9-10.

³ *SG* iv¹⁰ 190; cf. most recently Balsdon, *Life and Leisure*, p. 318.

⁴ It would be an odd way to say that he had won a half share in a 60,000 purse (60,000 is in any case the highest purse on record, won only three times by Diocles himself and separately listed).

⁵ *ad*=*adversus* or *contra* is a common colloquial usage: Leumann/Hofmann/Szantyr, *Lat. Gramm.* p. 220.

colour? Those narrowly won over another colour are already covered in the 'eripuit et vicit' rubric. What better explanation offers than the sort of race we know to have been common in later times: the four colours racing as two pairs? Since such races had to be run quite differently (one driver trying to tire or foul the opposition so as to leave a clear field for his partner, as in the contest described by Sidonius), it would be appropriate to list them separately. A further point is the overwhelming preponderance of such victories with just one colour, the Blues. Perhaps the others were won in the days before Diocles settled down as a Red, implying a regular pairing in his day of Red and Blue.

There are also the pairings which Malalas attributes to Romulus, in his explanation of the alignment of the colours according to their physical properties.¹ The earth, which is green, 'naturally' blends with the air, which is white; red is subordinate to blue because water, which is blue, extinguishes fire, which is red! Now Malalas purports to be writing of early Rome. Yet modern scholars have usually assumed that his pairings in fact reflect the practice of the sixth-century East, Constantinople or John's own Antioch. And on the basis of this passage, together with others from Corippus, the *Chronicon Paschale*, and Cedrenus, it has been argued that the pairings of sixth-century Constantinople were: White and Green versus Red and Blue. So the standard work of Friedlaender² and more recently J. Jarry.³ So too the latest work on Roman games, by R. Auguet.⁴

Had this been so, we should have to assume a change between the sixth and tenth centuries, for the *Book of Ceremonies* operates throughout with the pairings: Red and Green versus White and Blue. For Jarry, the choice between Constantine VII and Malalas/Corippus is simple: 'il va sans dire que ce texte du X^e siècle ne saurait balancer l'autorité de textes presque contemporaines'. Is it in fact necessary to assume that either Corippus or Malalas refers to contemporary practice (Cedrenus and the *Chronicon Paschale* may be eliminated at once since they merely repeat what is in Malalas)? Let us take Malalas first.

He cites as his authority one Charax of Pergamum, an

¹ p. 176 Bonn.

² SG ii¹⁰ 34.

³ Syria xxxvii (1960), 352.

⁴ *Cruauté et civilisation: les jeux romains* (1970), 170.

obscure figure until lately supposed undatable. Jacoby was prepared to place him as late as the sixth century,¹ in which case he too might have been held to reflect the pairings of the early Byzantine East rather than Rome. But recent epigraphic finds have revealed a distinguished career under Hadrian and Pius, culminating in a consulate for 147, by when he was already famous as a historian.² Parallel accounts in Tertullian and John the Lydian long ago led to the reasonable hypothesis that Charax too must have drawn on the *Ludicra Historia* of Suetonius.³ We can now add that, whether or not he used Suetonius (he might conceivably have written before Suetonius), since Charax wrote at a time when the factional colours had not yet been introduced into the eastern cities (Ch. VIII), he must in any case have had the factions of Rome in mind. *Prima facie* then, Malalas' pairings reflect conditions in (at latest) second-century Rome.

Things are the other way round with Corippus. *Prima facie* he is writing very specifically of the hippodrome of Constantinople in November 565. In fact this section of his poem is a completely detachable digression introduced with the formula 'antiqui sanxere patres . . .' and continuing with an account of the seasonal connotations of the colours which bears obvious similarities to all the others mentioned in the preceding pages.⁴ It would be idle to single out a particular source, yet it is plain that a written source rather than personal observation does underly Corippus' trite and disproportionate excursus.

So he is not an unequivocal witness to sixth-century practice. Like all the others he is writing of the Roman origins. It may be added that the text of the passage is by no means above suspicion. Stylistic and interpretative difficulties alike can all be removed by a simple emendation⁵ which would restore what we shall see was unquestionably the normal Byzantine pairing: Red and Green versus White and Blue.

¹ F. Jacoby, *Fr. Gr. Hist.* IIc (1926), 312f.

² C. Habicht, 'Zwei neue Inschriften aus Pergamon', *Istanb. Mitt.* ix/x (1959/60), 109f. (cf. J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Épig.* 1961, no. 511; F. Millar, *Cassius Dio* (1964), 183). Note the emphatic placing of τὸν συγγραφέα after his Roman offices, evidently conceived as his major title to fame.

³ Wuilleumier, *MEFR* xliv (1927), 191f.

⁴ See Castorina's full analysis of the elements which all these accounts share: *Tertullian, De Spect.* (1961), lxxxiiiif.

⁵ Appendix E.

A hitherto unnoticed point is the order in which the colours are named in Byzantine sources. Almost invariably the two major colours are named first, and then the two others; but whether Green or Blue is named first, the order of the other two is adjusted accordingly, so as always to imply the Red/Green and White/Blue pairings. Whenever Malalas writes of the factions of *contemporary* Constantinople, his order reflects these pairings just like all other Byzantine sources, thus contradicting his own earlier statement—or rather confirming that he was not there writing of contemporary Constantinopolitan practice. In 490 the consul Longinus is said to have given the factions new dancers, in the order: Green, Blue, Red, White.¹ In 520 the factions clamour for dancers in the same order: Green, Blue, Red, White.²

It is striking too that John the Lydian, in an account which almost certainly goes back (like Malalas' antiquarian section) to Charax or Suetonius, none the less twice lists the colours in the order³ Red, White, Green, Blue. He did what Malalas does as a matter of course in his later narrative, but was copying his source too carefully to do in the antiquarian section; he (no doubt unconsciously) put them in an order which implied the pairings he was used to in his own day.

For Blue preceding Green (the usual sequence in tenth-century ceremonial) we have Symeon the logothete's account of a race in which the Emperor Michael III took part shortly before his murder in 867: Michael himself wore Blue, Constantine his logothete White, and two lesser courtiers Green and Red.⁴ At his second triumphal games in 837 Theophilus competed in the first race, driving a white chariot and wearing blue; the combination can hardly be accidental.⁵ Then there

¹ p. 386 Bonn.

² frag. 43, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 170.32–3.

³ *de mens.* iii.26; iv.25.

⁴ Theophanes continuatus p. 835.6f. Bonn. The less reliable continuation of Theophanes (p. 198.15f. of the same volume) gives Michael as Blue, Constantine Green, and the lesser men White and Red.

⁵ George the Monk, p. 707 Muralt (= *PG* cx.1017). Reiske, in a note to *de Caer.* 413.11 (Bonn ed., ii.418) quoted this passage among others to illustrate the use of white horses for triumphs. White horses, yes, (add *Caer.* 505.12, 17, and for the earlier tradition see now S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (1971), 68–71), but I do not know of any evidence for white chariots. As early as the second century it was normal for the Emperor to drive a gold chariot (A. Alföldi, *Röm. Mitt.* 1934, 108),

are the paintings of Porphyrius and his colleagues c. 500 as commemorated by a series of iambic epigrams in the *Planudean Anthology*, in the order: Blue, Green, White, Red.¹ Compare from the twelfth century the order White, Red, Blue, Green in Theodore Prodromus (p. 50). For Constantinople I know of no exception to this principle of arrangement, which is also reflected for Ravenna c. 450 by Sidonius,² and for early sixth-century Rome by Cassiodorus.³

The three most interesting illustrations of these pairings come from rather off-beat sources—though none the less conclusive for that.

First we have a Jewish Midrash of unknown but certainly Byzantine date.⁴ The author depicts King Solomon in the style and trappings of a Byzantine emperor in the hippodrome of a Jerusalem that bears more than a passing resemblance to Constantinople. The circus performers are divided into four factions, and the spectators too are divided up by colours:⁵

(1) The King with his household, the scholars, the priests, and the Levites, dressed in blue; (2) the people of Jerusalem, dressed in white; (3) the people who lived outside Jerusalem, dressed in red; (4) the Gentiles who from distant countries brought presents to Solomon, and who were dressed in green.

Solomon then explains these colours in the traditional manner as symbolic of the seasons. It is not just that the order of the four colours here implies the usual pairings. Blue and White are plainly and sharply opposed to Red and Green.

and it is unlikely that the Byzantines would have modified such a custom. In any case, in a hippodrome race Theophilus would surely have used a regular hippodrome chariot, in which case the colour specified would inevitably refer to one of the four hippodrome colours.

¹ *A. Plan.* 380-7; see *Porphyrius*, pp. 200f.

² *carmen* xxiii.324; H. A. Harris, *Sport in Greece and Rome* (1972), 195, mistakenly takes Sidonius to be writing of Rome.

³ *Var.* iii.51.5.

⁴ German translation by J. Perles, 'Thron und Circus des Königs Salomo', *Monatsschrift für Gesch. u. Wiss. des Judentums* xxi (1872), 122f., and partial translation and commentary in A. Wünsche, *Salomos Thron u. Hippodrom* (*Ex. Oriente Lux*, ed. H. Winckler, ii.3), 1906, 38f.; both largely superseded now by E. Patlagean, 'Une image de Salomon en Basileus Byzantin', *Revue des études juives* cxxi IV.ser.i, 1962, 8-33 (French translation and commentary).

⁵ I quote from M. Seligsohn, *Jewish Encyclopaedia* xi (1907), 442-3; see too M. L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* iv (1913), 160-2, cf. vi (1928), 298.

Next there is a miniature in the Ambrosian *Iliad*, now generally agreed to have been executed in the early years of the sixth century.¹ It is a representation of the five drivers in the chariot-race from Book xxiii being given their prizes by Achilles—with each driver wearing one of the four Roman colours. Now there were two ways in which the miniaturist could reveal his own factional sympathies: first in his choice for first (and second) prize, and second by the colour he repeated for the fifth driver. He has left us in little doubt. Green comes first followed by its partner Red; third Blue, fourth White—and fifth is Green again. It will be remembered that the fifth driver was Eumelus, the likely winner until his yoke was unfairly broken by Athene. Achilles gave him a special consolation prize, and would have given him the second prize had not Antilochus (who came second) protested. So the three best drivers all turn out to come from the Green/Red stable. Evidently our miniaturist was a Green. By the same token, the preferential treatment shown to the Blues and Whites in the Midrash suggests that its author was a Blue.

Third, a passage from recension *Γ* of the Alexander Romance.² According to the original version, Alexander won a chariot-race against eight other champions at Olympia when only fifteen years old. Our version places the race in Rome, reduces the number of effective competitors to four, and gives it a thoroughly Roman flavour, with cheering 'demes' and even a *mapparius*.³ The transference of the race from Olympia is presumably a consequence of the abolition of the Olympic games in 393, in keeping with the general tendency to

¹ R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Ilias Ambrosiana* (Fontes Ambrosiani xxciii, 1953), pl. iv, and in *Hellenistic-Byzantine Miniatures of the Iliad* (1955), 119–20, 166–7 (making the unnecessary inference that the miniaturist worked during the period of 'Green supremacy'—below p. 131—under Anastasius). For the palaeographical arguments for an early sixth-century date see G. Cavallo, *Dialoghi di archeologia* vii (1973), 70–85, suggesting an Alexandrian rather than (as Bandinelli had originally held) a Constantinopolitan origin (approved now by Bandinelli, *ibid.* 86–96).

² i.19 (U. von Lauenstein, *Der griech. Alexanderroman, Rez. Γ* (Beitr. z. klass. Phil. iv, 1962), p. 50.5f.). On the divergences between this recension and the others see R. Merkelbach, *Die Quellen d. griech. Alexanderroman* (Zetemeta ix, 1954), 64, 175–9.

³ H. J. Gleixner, *Das Alexanderbild der Byzantiner* (Diss. München 1961), 94–6, points out that in i.26 Alexander is represented in a manner reminiscent of the Byzantine Emperor.

purge the Alexander legend of its more objectionably pagan features.¹

Alexander wears a tunic the colour of the rising sun (ἡλίου ἀνατέλλοντος). Of his three competitors, one, Nicolaus, is dressed in 'heavenly costume' (οὐρανίῳ ἐσθῆτι). Without too much difficulty one can recognize Red and Blue here. But Callisthenes and Laomedon wear tunics coloured 'eicasian' (εἰκάσιος) and 'olympian' (ὀλύμπιος) respectively. ὀλύμπιος might seem to suggest blue again rather than either green or white, and εἰκάσιος is a complete mystery.

For illumination we must turn to the acclamations of the factions in the *Book of Ceremonies*.² There we discover that each colour acclaimed its driver under the following stock names: Blues Uranius, Greens Olympius, Whites Eicasius and Reds Anatellon. Reiske thought that these were the names of four famous early charioteers of each colour,³ and Uranius and Olympius are certainly attested as charioteer names (though not exclusively with the Blues and Greens respectively).⁴ But whatever the true origin of the practice, Byzantines were evidently not satisfied with so mundane a theory as Reiske's. The reviser of this chapter of the Alexander Romance has provided a typically Byzantine explanation in terms of the elements.

We need not follow Alexander's victory in all its details. What concerns us is the simple fact that Laomedon the Green races in concert with the Red Alexander against the other two. This he does despite his 'faction' (οἱ τοῦ μέρους ὀλυμπίου), who (not yet realizing the prowess of Alexander) warn Laomedon not to take on the other two with the aid of a mere boy. Here then we have a regular aetiology of the Byzantine pairings. It is also an aetiology of the supremacy of the major colours. The reviser's sympathies evidently lay with the Reds/Greens, but Alexander, an untried lad of fifteen, could not yet be the Green driver, the *factionarius*. He must be the *micropanites*, who creates

¹ For some aspects of the process see L. Cracco Ruggini, 'Sulla cristianizzazione della cultura pagana: il mito greco e latino di Alessandro dall' età Antonina al medioevo', *Athenaeum* n.s.xliii (1965), 3-80.

² See G. Millet, 'Les Noms des auriges dans les acclamations de l'hippodrome', *Receuil d'études . . . N. P. Kondakov* (1926), 279f.

³ See his commentary, reprinted in the Bonn edition, ii p. 316.

⁴ See *Porphyrus*, p. 175.

a sensation by beating not only the opposition but his own senior partner to boot.

v

The precise relationship of the minor to the major colours is something of a puzzle. The standard view that Reds and Whites gradually withered away may be an exaggeration, not only of the degree of their eventual absorption into the Blues and Greens, but also of their original independence and parity.

Porphyrius, like Diocles four centuries earlier, was always switching colours. But he was never anything but a Blue or Green. By the tenth century there was a regular hierarchy, with a clear difference in rank between Red and White *micropanitae* and Blue and Green *factionarii*, and a special ceremonial for the promotion of one to the other.¹ In the early Empire, despite the unquestioned general ascendancy of Blues and Greens, some of the best drivers we happen to know of were Reds (Diocles, Teres), as well as the first *factionarius* on record.² But there may be less of a difference here than it might seem at first sight.

Early in sixth-century Constantinople a statue was erected to the Red driver Julian on his retirement,³ and the whole city was plunged into grief at the death of the White Constantine.⁴ A top pantomime was presented to each of the four colours of Constantinople in 490;⁵ it may be that Blues and Greens got the best, but at the same time it would seem to follow that Reds and Whites got the next best. One driver from each colour was painted on the ceiling of the Kathisma c. 500. The Red and White drivers—Julian and Constantine—were champions no less than the Blue and Green.⁶

When the factions were private businesses it must often have happened that the most prosperous was able to hire more good drivers than the others. If the Byzantine system ensured that Reds and Whites regularly had the third- and fourth-ranking charioteers and pantomimes, then it must also have ensured that the four colours were well balanced. As for the Byzantine pairing system, though it formalized the dependent role of the

¹ *De Caer.* 327-9 R=ii.131-5 V.

² Polyphemus, see p. 11.

³ *Porphyrius*, p. 207.

⁴ *Porphyrius*, pp. 136f.

⁵ Malalas, p. 386 Bonn.

⁶ p. 48, above.

minor colours, it cannot have guaranteed victory in the races to the major colours. The *diversium* could be raced between major and minor as well as between two major colours, and Porphyrius is praised for beating his 'comrades' as well as his 'enemies'.¹ Perhaps then the Byzantine formalization of the relationship between major and minor colours was less a consequence of the complete dominance of the one by the other than of a desire to engineer the closest and most open competition between all four. Modern obsession with the extra-hippodrome activities (real and imagined) of the Blues and Greens has distracted attention from the importance of exciting races for a successful meeting. And only close races are exciting.²

No doubt there is a sense in which by comparison with the Principate the Reds and Whites of Constantinople no longer had an independent existence. We hear only of Blue and Green stables, for example,³ and the *Book of Ceremonies* suggests that only Blues and Greens had a regular circus organization. Ultimately at any rate they were financed from the same source. Yet can we really believe Procopius when he says that the whole population of the Empire was divided between Blues and Greens?⁴ Did Reds and Whites have no partisans at all?

The Reds at least had one very distinguished partisan: the Emperor Anastasius.⁵ The Porphyrius epigram elucidated above suggests that all four colours would normally cheer separately for their respective favourites, and a fragment of Malalas⁶ describes Red and White fans shouting for their favourite pantomimes no less than the Blues and Greens. Factional graffiti have been preserved from all over the eastern provinces in the fifth and sixth centuries, usually in the formula *νικᾶ ἡ τύχη τῶν Πρασίνων* or *Βενέτων*.⁷ Yet there is one from

¹ *A. Pal.* xv.47.6, cf. *A. Plan.* 337.6.

² See *Porphyrius*, p. 243.

³ In fourth-century Rome the *Notitia Romae* still records stables for all four colours. The later references collected by A. Chastagnol, *Préfecture urbaine* (1960), 82, n.2, are imprecise, though it is unlikely that the Red and White stables would have been closed down (or renamed) even if they did no longer function separately. For Constantinople see the references in R. Guillard, *Études topogr.* i (1969), 397 (tendentiously interpreted).

⁴ See too p. 75 below.

⁵ Malalas, p. 393.

⁶ n.2, p. 66 above.

⁷ All those known to me are collected in *Porphyrius*, pp. 74-6, 276, and cf. pp. 314f below.

Syria¹, *νικᾶ ἡ τύχη τῶν Κοχ*. The text is apparently complete, and the editor tentatively suggested that the last three letters are an abbreviation for *Κοχχίνων*, i.e. *Κοκκίνων*, meaning 'the Reds', though he admitted that he could find no example of the word so used in Byzantine sources. An example can in fact be produced. A list of circus terms in a bilingual glossary includes alongside the regular equivalents for Green and White, *callinos/venetus* and *coccinus/roseus*.² *Callinus* stands for *καλλάϊνος*, a common variant for *Βένετος* and attested not least on inscriptions from Syria.³ There seems no reason why *Κόκκινος* should not have been used there for Red. If so, more evidence for Red partisans, in Syria as well as the capital.

According to Malalas Anastasius reserved his favours for the Reds so as to be free in his dealings with both the two major colours. Even so, the mere fact that he did so at all proves not just that Red partisans did exist, but (much more interesting) that a Red partisan need not automatically be a Green partisan as well.

Of course Green and Blue partisans must always and everywhere have been in the majority. But it is striking that there should be even this much evidence for Red and White partisans from the late Empire, in view of the fact that (excepting one joke in Martial)⁴ there is none at all from the Principate.

The inferior position of Reds and Whites seems merely to have become more accentuated in some ways during the late Empire. The differences perhaps amount to little more than an institutionalization of existing features and tendencies. It is plain from as early as the Julio-Claudians that Blues and Greens were far more popular. But even then it was not a matter of popularity alone. The Fabricius Veiento affair shows that Blues and Greens were both willing and able to hold out against blackmail after the Reds and Whites had given way. Why and how Reds and Whites were already weaker than their rivals is altogether obscure, but it is a fact which must be accepted.

What matters most for our present purpose is the realization

¹ *Princeton Expedition to Syria* iiiA (1921), p. 149; A. Christophilopulu, *Char. A. K. Orlandos* ii (1966), 357.

² *Corp. Gloss.* iii (*Hermeneumata Monacensia*), 179-8.11. Cf. too Martial, xiv.131.1.

³ p. 13, n.2 above.

⁴ xiv.131.1.

that the sudden and violent notoriety that came to the Blues and Greens in the fifth century has nothing to do with the ascendancy those same Blues and Greens exercised over Reds and Whites. Their greater popularity and power is a phenomenon as old as the Empire itself, of social significance only in so far as it may be inevitable that a highly competitive sport will divide a compact population into two rather than four primary loyalties.

It will be argued in Ch. VIII that a major cause of change in the role of the factions was a sharp increase in the number of the Blues and Greens in the fifth century. But it was not from the withering away of the Reds and Whites that they won these new recruits.

IV. The Social Compositions of the Factions

CENTRAL to all modern accounts of the factions is the conviction that the Blues represented the upper, the Greens the lower classes. The roots of this view go back before Manojlović, but it was he who first formulated and supported it systematically.¹ Marxist historians, while deprecating the crudeness of Manojlović's analysis, have produced what is no more than a refined version of it:² the Blues are still the landowning aristocracy, but also their clients; the Greens embraced well-to-do commercial and industrial interests as well as the poor.

The latter may well seem an anachronistic polarization for the population of a city of this period, but the social approach is at least more promising than the culs-de-sac we have been exploring so far. But before we can turn to these theories we must first consider a basic presupposition of all such social interpretations (at least as so far formulated).

This is the assumption that the *whole* of Constantinople (and of other cities) was divided between the two colours. That is to say, it is assumed that *all* social categories would be represented among the ranks of the Blues and Greens: the only matter for debate is which colour each category aligns itself with.

Who were the partisans?

The cornerstone of this assumption is (of course) the 'deme-fallacy'. If the 'demes' of the Blues and Greens really had been residential areas of the city, then it would follow that most if not all the population automatically qualified as either a Blue or a Green. With this cornerstone removed, we must consider afresh just who the partisans were, what sort of proportion of the population they represented, and whether it is either likely or

¹ *Byzantion* 1936, 644-55, firmly upheld (e.g.) by Grégoire, *CRAI* 1946, 571f.

² D'jakonov, *Viz. Sbornik* 1945, 188f.; Levchenko, *Viz. Vrem.* 1947, 180f.; Winkler, *Sozialökonomische Verhältnisse* (1961), 324f.; Pigulewskaja, *Byzanz auf den Wegen nach Indien* (1969), 43-4.

provable that they lived in some areas of the city rather than others.

When Procopius said, in a much-quoted passage, that 'in every city the population has been divided for a long time past into the Blues and the Greens',¹ he no more expected to be taken literally than Juvenal did when he wrote that 'totam hodie Romam circus capit'.² Both Rome and Constantinople had a population of perhaps half a million in their heydays.³ The Circus Maximus held between 150,000 and 200,000,⁴ the hippodrome of Constantinople no more than 100,000.⁵ No doubt all who attended cheered for one colour or another, but as we would expect and as Procopius himself makes clear elsewhere, there was all the difference in the world between those who just happened to support one colour rather than another on race-days, and the real partisans. When discussing the licence Justinian allowed the Blues Procopius adds that it was not all the Blues who took advantage of it, but only the partisans (οὐχ ἅπαντες δὲ οἱ Βένετοι . . . ἀλλ' ὅσοι στασιῶται ὄντες ἐτύγγανον).⁶ A little later he says that none were more shocked by the outrages of the Blue partisans than the Blue non-partisans (τῶν Βενέτων οἱ μὴ στασιῶται),⁷ for not even they were left alone. The implication is what one would in any case have expected: that the real partisans were an extremist minority.

Considerations of general probability and the many analogies in subsequent history might suggest that these extremists would be young people. This supposition is overwhelmingly borne out by a number of passages in Procopius and other sixth and seventh-century writers. When Justinian began to favour the Blues, says Procopius, 'many *other* young men (νεανίαι) flocked to join them'.⁸ Sons of men in high places associated with 'these young men', and Justinian, to his shame, heaped money and honours on 'these young men' (νεανίαι again, styled στασιῶται in the preceding sentence).⁹ When recounting the deeds of the

¹ *BP* i.24.2, cf. *Anecd.* vii.1; Simocatta makes the same remark, viii.7.11 (Bury was exaggerating when he wrote that in this 'important passage . . . only two parties are recognized', *LRE* i² (1923), 85, n.6).

² *Sat.* xi.197.

³ e.g. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* ii (1964), 698, 1040.

⁴ J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome* (1969), 268.

⁵ M. MacClagan, *The City of Constantinople* (1968), 44.

⁶ *Anecd.* vii.2.

⁷ *Ibid.* vii.18.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vii.23.

⁹ *Ibid.* vii.35, 42.

partisans of Antioch, having once identified them Procopius refers to them throughout thereafter simply as the 'young men' (*νεανία*).¹ The 'young men of the city' who massacred the Persian garrison of Jerusalem² were almost certainly the Blues and Greens, who had refused to allow the patriarch to surrender the city to the Persians before its capture in 614.³ In the *Wars* it is some unspecified 'young men' who murdered the bishop of Cyzicus; in the *Secret History* we discover that two Green partisans were arrested.⁴ Somebody who was evidently a prominent Green mentioned in connection with a riot in 565 (see p. 89) is described as *νεώτερος*. Another such casualty in an earlier riot is likewise described as *νεώτερος*.⁵ A Green rapist mentioned during a riot in 563 is described as the son of a high official (p. 89)—evidently therefore a young man. Corippus' vivid description of the ceremonial acclamations and dances of the factions at the coronation of Justin II in 565 styles them just *iuvenes*.⁶ Agathias⁷ considered factional rivalry to be a danger that the young were prone to, and Menander Protector—the only partisan to have told his story—looked back on his days in the rivalry of hippodrome and theatre as an episode of his mis-spent youth.⁸ Furthermore, it is clear from Procopius' remark⁹ that under Justinian 'many young men were attracted to this association who had never previously been involved in such pursuits' that the partisans might *normally* be expected to comprise a minority of even the youth.

The extravagant clothes they wore (with special sleeves that billowed out when they waved their arms), their 'Hunnic' hair-style and 'Persian' beards and moustaches,¹⁰ these are all

¹ *BP* ii.8, 11, 17, 28.

² Sebeos, *Hist. d'Héraclios*, tr. F. Macler (1904), 24, p. 68.

³ 'Antiochus Strategus' (more correctly Eustratius), 'Capture of Jerusalem', tr. Conybeare, *EHR* xxv (1910), 503-4.

⁴ *BP* i.25.38, cf. *Anecd.* xvii.41, 44; see S. Vryonis Jr., *BZ* lviii (1965), 53.

⁵ Malalas, *frag. Tusc.* 4, *PG* lxxxv.1820. Cf. too the *νεώτεροι Πράσινοι* of *Chron. Pasch.* 625.12, and the *νεοί Πράσινοι* of an unpublished inscription from Alexandria (kindly shown to me by Dr. Z. Borkowski).

⁶ *Laud. Just.* iii.68.

⁷ *Hist.* v.21.4.

⁸ Fr. 1, *FHG* iv.201-2 (Suidas, s.v. *Μένανδρος*). 'Quand il était jeune', wrote Zacharias Scholasticus of a certain Evagrius, 'il lui arriva de se laisser entraîner par les passions de la jeunesse, et il alla voir un spectacle qui se donnait dans cette ville [Antioch]' (*Vie de Sévère, Patr. Or.* ii.i (1903), p. 55; my italics).

⁹ *Anecd.* vii.22.

¹⁰ Procopius, *Anecd.* vii.3f., cf. Agathias, v.14.4.

the sort of extreme fashions that point to the young. Fancy clothes and hair-styles are a time-honoured form of group identification among the young. In every age it is above all the young who are credited with just the sort of violent behaviour which our sources ascribe to the Blues and Greens of the early Byzantine world. I quote two ancient and two modern examples where the sources are full enough to provide reliable evidence: the cities of Renaissance Tuscany¹ and sixteenth-century France,² and (nearer home) the Mods and Rockers of the 1960s and soccer hooligans of the 1970s.³

There are no such precise descriptions of circus partisans in the earlier period, but a ruling of the third-century jurist Callistratus envisages trouble at public spectacles being caused by 'those who call themselves young men (*iuvenes*)'.⁴ The trouble-makers in question must have been, not individual young men, but societies (or groups of societies) called *iuvenes*. All over the Empire in its first three centuries there existed associations devoted to athletics and other sports called, in the West *iuvenes*,⁵ in the East *νεοί* or (Procopius' usual name for the partisans) *νεανία*.⁶ These youths took part in their activities themselves, but alongside them we also find supporters' clubs, no doubt likewise composed mainly of young people. There are the 'Lovers of Arms' (*Φίλοπλοι*) of Termessus, Miletus, and Ephesus—certainly (as L. Robert has shown) *supporters* of gladiators, not themselves gladiators.⁷ At Ephesus there was one

¹ D. Herlihy, 'Some psychological and social roots of violence in the Tuscan cities', in L. Martines (ed.), *Violence and Civil Disorder in Italian Cities 1200-1500* (1972), 140f., blaming the prolonged bachelorhood caused by a late marriage-age among the 'spoiled rich'.

² Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The rites of violence: religious riot in sixteenth century France', *Past and Present* 59 (1973), 51-91; the remark on p. 87, 'Adolescent males and even boys aged ten to twelve played a strikingly important role in both Catholic and Protestant crowds' could as easily have been written of present day Northern Ireland.

³ On the age of soccer hooligans, see Peter Marsh, 'Understanding aggro', *New Society* 3 April 1975, pp. 6f. ('Younger fans, from ten to fifteen years old, seem to need the symbolic value of extreme dress more than those who are a little older...', p. 9). On Mods and Rockers, S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1972).

⁴ *Digest* 48.19.27.3f.

⁵ R. MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Late Roman Empire* (1963), 135f.; H. W. Pleket, *Mnemosyne* 1969, 281f.; J. Gagé, *Historia* xix (1970), 232f.; M. Jaczynowska, *Recherches sur les structures sociales dans l'antiquité classique* (CNRS 1970), 265f.

⁶ C. A. Forbes, *Neoi* (1933), *passim*.

⁷ *Les Gladiateurs* (1940), 25f.

group called the 'Lovers of Arms and the Vedii' (*Φίλοπλοι Φιλοβήδιοι*), named after their patrons, the great family of the Vedii. Then there are the 'Lovers of the Chase' (*Φιλοκύνηγοι*) of Philippi.¹ The astrologer Vettius Valens links *φίλοπλοι* with *φιλοπάλαιστροι*, no doubt regular associations of athletics supporters.² An inscription from Verona mentions the 'Lovers' (*amatores*) of the gladiator Glaucus.³ A graffito on a tavern wall announces the existence of the 'Paridiani' of Pompeii, fans of the great pantomime dancer Paris.⁴

Just as supporters of Paris were called *Paridiani* and of the Vedii *Vediani*, just as Nero's fan club was the *Augustiani* and the followers of Christ *Christiani*, so the partisans of the colours must originally have been called, not *Prasini* and *Veneti*, but *Prasiniani* and *Venetiani*. This natural supposition is fully borne out (as Maricq saw) by our evidence from the first two centuries. Trimalchio called his slave Cario a 'Prasinianus famosus'.⁵ Marcus Aurelius was grateful that he had never been tempted to become *μήτε Πρασιανός μήτε Βενετιανός*.⁶ Marcus' less-disciplined brother L. Verus, a fanatical partisan of the Greens, suffered many insults 'a Venetianis'.⁷ Early inscriptions tell the same story.⁸ Maricq remarked that these formations 'n'ont pas conquis le droit de cité en grec'.⁹ I should myself be reluctant to credit the Byzantine circus vocabulary with even this degree of originality (the longer forms do occur in Greek texts of the earlier period). The answer is surely that the shortened forms *Prasini* and *Veneti* had already won the day in Latin before the Roman circus colours entered the Greek world (which they did much later than is generally supposed).¹⁰ The *Historia Augusta*, in a second-century context, has 'populus Prasinianorum'.¹¹ A fourth-century inscription from Carthage has the same formula

¹ Robert, *op. cit.* 322-4.

² F. Cumont, *L'Égypte des astrologues* (1937), 79, n.3; cf. Robert, p. 25, n.4.

³ *ILS* 5121; in view of the parallels quoted above we need hardly see 'an element of homosexuality' in such inscriptions (Grant, *Gladiators*, p. 96). cf. too *amatores palaestrae* and *armorum* in Firmicus Maternus, i.180.25; 179.26; 181.14; 216.14, and *φίλοπλοι* linked with *φιλοπάλαιστροι* in Vettius Valens, p. 43.17; 201.27.

⁴ *CIL* iv.7919 (= Diehl, *Pomp. Wandinschr.*² (1930), 909).

⁵ Petronius, *Sat.* 70.10.

⁶ *Med.* i.5. (*Πρασιανός* sic MSS.). ⁷ *HA Verus* 6.2.

⁸ *CIL* vi.9719 (*ILS* 7492); 10059; 37840; 10044 (*ILS* 5314); xv.7044; *IG* xiv.1503.

⁹ *BARB* xxxvi (1950), 412, n.1.

¹⁰ See Ch. VIII.

¹¹ *HA Verus* 6.6.

in the shortened form, 'populus Veneti',¹ a style (*δημος Βενέτου* in Greek) that becomes standard in Late Latin as well as Byzantine usage.

There can, I think, be no doubt that the partisans of the circus were associations of this sort. Indeed, we shall see that it is more than a coincidence that the 'rise' of the factions in the fifth century follows within a generation or two the decline of virtually all other such associations (Ch. VIII).

Like other social and professional bodies,² circus partisans had special seats reserved for them in the circus. Our evidence for Rome is slight: Elagabalus used to ride round the arena dressed as a Green and salute the presidents of the games and his own partisans (*στασιῶται*) like any ordinary driver.³ At Constantinople there is frequent reference to the grandstands (known, like the partisans themselves, as *δημοί*) where the four colours sat.⁴ The *Patria* of Constantinople tell us that this was one of the many features modelled on the Roman circus, and it may well be that, in Rome as at Constantinople, the partisans sat facing the Emperor.

If the partisans of the four colours could all be accommodated in part of one side of the hippodrome, evidently they can have constituted only a minority even of those who attended race meetings. The same was obviously true of provincial hippodromes and theatres. Steps in the theatre of Miletus are inscribed *Βενέτω(ν)*⁵—evidently the seats reserved for the Blues. At Aphrodisias, after *τόπος Ἐβρέων* and *τόπος νεωτέρω(ν)*, *τόπος Βενέτων* can still be read on a bench in the Odeum.⁶ The Blues of Aphrodisias naturally had their seats—but so did the Jews and 'tcenagers'⁷ and no doubt many other groups. The Blues of Antioch once irritated the Greens by allowing the Jews to sit with them⁸—a situation which presupposes a seating arrangement as at Miletus and Aphrodisias.

¹ *I. Lat. Afr.* 385.

² Cf. Balsdon, *Life and Leisure*, pp. 260-1.

³ Dio, lxxx.14.2.

⁴ R. Guillard, *Mél. L. Halphen* (1951), 297f. = *Études topogr.* i (1969), 411f., to which add the *δημοί* in 'Solomon's' hippodrome (cf. p. 67), *Rev. études juives* 1962, 33.

⁵ Unpublished; though cf. L. Robert, *Hellenica* xi/xii (1960), 49, n.

⁶ Unpublished; information from Miss Joyce Reynolds.

⁷ With *νεωτέρων* cf. [pra]etext[atis] on a seat in the Colosseum of Rome (*CIL* vi. 32098c).

⁸ Malalas, frag. 35, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 167.7-8.

Blocks of seats would not have continued to be set aside for the Blues and Greens as though they were but one element in the citizen body unless there was a sense in which the majority of the spectators were *not* Blues and Greens.

To return to our one and only statistic, the 1,500 Greens and 900 Blues under Maurice. Maurice would hardly have asked the demarchs to produce their records (*χάρται*) in the first place if he could have counted on *all* those present in the hippodrome manning the walls for him. It is clear from Simocatta's full account that it was the Blues and Greens, not the whole crowd, who responded to Maurice's appeal,¹ and naturally he was anxious to know just how many they were.² He must have been disappointed when he found out—especially since the number of partisans actually available may well have been even lower than these paper totals supplied by the demarchs.

The place of the partisans in the structure of the state

Most modern studies (those of Bréhier,³ Dölger,⁴ Pigulewskaja,⁵ Claude,⁶ to name only a few of the most recent) pay these few hundred sports fans the extraordinary compliment of allotting them a distinct place in the social structure of the early Byzantine state. This is not how contemporaries saw them.

We are lucky enough to possess a remarkable if almost wholly unknown analysis of the social structure of Constantinople, dating probably from the second half of the reign of Justinian.⁷ It is tucked away in the introduction to an otherwise not particularly interesting or remarkable handbook on strategy. The

¹ viii.7.8–11.

² Pseudo-Codinus' story of 8,000 partisans cannot be regarded as historical (p. 111); still less so the 16,000 (4,000 to each colour) in 'Solomon's' hippodrome, which is very late (probably tenth century, E. Patlagean, *Rev. ét. juives* 1962, 20f.) and perhaps a deliberate exaggeration of the true Byzantine figure to glorify Solomon the more.

³ *Les Institutions de l'empire byzantin* (1949), 195f.

⁴ ΠΑΡΑΣΠΟΡΑ (1961), 130f.

⁵ *Byzanz auf den Wegen nach Indien* (1969), 43–4.

⁶ *Die byzant. Stadt* (1969), 158–9.

⁷ Anon., *περὶ στρατηγικῆς*, ed. H. Köchly and W. Rüstow, *Griech. Kriegsschriftsteller* ii.2 (1855), with useful introduction and notes. For the date, Köchly and Rüstow, pp. 37–8 with their notes on the passages there cited; see too p. 81, n.5 below. Virtually nothing has been written on the work since, though see the brief notice in A. Dain's (posthumous) 'Les Stratégistes byzantins', *Travaux et Mémoires* ii (1967), 343. It would certainly repay further study.

first three chapters present an analysis of the constituent parts of the state¹ (omitting the army) which, though somewhat philosophical and over-formalized, is by no means without interest. Taking the position of the Emperor at the top of the pyramid for granted, the rest of the civilian hierarchy is tabulated as follows:

- (1) The clergy (*ἱερεῖς*);
- (2) The administration:
 - (a) executives (*ἄρχοντες*);
 - (b) advisers (*σύμβουλοι*);
- (3) The judiciary (*δικασταί*);
- (4) Those concerned with finance²:
 - (a) those who assess and impose taxes;
 - (b) those who collect them;
- (5) Academics and professional people (those wholly concerned with *τέχνη* and *ἐπιστήμη*);
- (6) Artisans:³
 - (a) traders, those who simply sell (*τὸ ἐμπορικόν*);
 - (b) those who work with raw materials, blacksmiths and so forth (*τὸ ὑλικόν*);
 - (c) those who hire out their services, wood-carriers and the like (*τὸ ὑπηρετικόν*);
- (7) The 'useless' (*ἄχρηστοι*, cf. i.4, ii.9), i.e. the old, young, and infirm;
- (8) 'Theatrical people' (*ὁ δὲ θεατρικὸν καὶ θυμελικὸν ὀνομάζεται*) charioteers, musicians, actors,⁴ and so forth. '[The Romans] use them on the birthdays and proclamations of Emperors, on city anniversaries and particularly for triumphs.'⁵

No modern analysis of the Byzantine state at this period would

¹ τί μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ πολιτεία καὶ πόσα μέρη ταύτης τυγχάνει; (iii.1f.).

² Who, the author adds, should be rich enough to make good arrears if necessary.

³ The subdivisions here are clarified by i.3 and ii.5-7.

⁴ ὑποκριταί, probably pantomimes, who are often euphemistically so styled: L. Robert, *Hermes* 1930, 110f.

⁵ μάλιστα δὲ ἐπὶ θριάμβων, οὓς δὲ ποιοῦσιν μετὰ τὴν νίκην, πολεμίους διὰ μέσου τῶν θεάτρων διαβιβάζοντες. The triumph the author has in mind can only be Belisarius', held in 534. According to Procopius, it was the first of its kind for 600 years (*BV* ii.9.2)---and it was also perhaps the last. To have singled out the role played by circus and theatre shows in its celebration (not mentioned in our other sources) our author must surely have been a contemporary.

have failed even to mention the circus factions. (2) would be taken for Blues, (6) for Greens, and the rest distributed variously according to taste. The Anonymus does not mention them because they were not in their own right an independent element in either the social or political structure of the state—though he may in fact have intended them to be subsumed along with τὸ θεατρικόν, since it was the partisans as much as the performers who made the ceremonial occasions the author has in mind so notable.

Two other texts present a similar if less comprehensive picture. Evagrius lists the opposition of most of Antioch to its patriarch Gregory *c.* 579:¹ the upper or governing classes (τὸ πᾶν τῆς πόλεως κεφάλαιον), the mob, and the artisans (εἴ τι . . . τὰς τέχνας τῇ πόλει συνεπλήρου) together. On the traditional view the first and last categories would no doubt have been identified as Blues and Greens respectively. Yet Evagrius goes on to list them *separately*: ‘even the two “demes” agreed for once and shouted insults in the streets and theatres’. We may compare the list of those who accompanied Heraclius to meet the Chagan of the Avars:² government officials (ἄρχοντες), landowners (κτήτορες), clergy, artisans (ἐργαστηριακοί),³ ‘demesmen’ from both factions, and a multitude of commoners as well. Once more, the implication is that the partisans are quite separate from all the other categories named, even the ‘multitude of commoners’. No doubt there were *individual* bureaucrats, landowners, artisans, commoners, and (by the seventh century at least) even clergy to be found in their ranks. But once they donned their blue and green coats and began to act out their role as the partisans of circus and theatre, they ceased to represent those other bodies and became something quite different: they were the Blues and the Greens, nothing more.

Let us turn now to the three texts on which the fragile Marxist analysis rests. The first, from John of Nikiu,⁴ turns out to be a mare’s nest. According to Charles’ translation: ‘taking

¹ *HE* vi.7.

² *Chron. Pasch.* p. 712.12f., and above, p. 47.

³ Perhaps in this context, as Beck suggests (*BZ* lviii (1965), 21), factory owners rather than factory workers.

⁴ §§109-16, p. 175 Charles = p. 430 (50) Zotenberg.

advantage of the war between Bonosus and Nicetas,¹ the artisan guilds of Egypt arose <and> perpetrated outrages on the Blues'. A footnote glosses 'artisan guilds' 'i.e. the Greens', implying that the two are somehow identical.² But Zotenberg's translation has 'la faction verte' in the text, with no word of artisan guilds.

This is a puzzling situation, though the truth is simple enough. The original text of John's chronicle is lost, as too is the Arabic version from which the seventeenth-century Ethiopic version which is all we possess was made. These translators were evidently not familiar with the Blues and Greens. The Blues appear in the Ethiopic as the nonsense word 'elwanutes', which must be a transliteration of 'al veneti' in the Arabic. The Greens do not appear at all. Where we would expect to find a reference to them the Ethiopic offers throughout a word meaning 'the workers'. Now it would be very surprising if John had mentioned the Blues as often as he did but *never* the Greens, and Zotenberg was surely right in his conjecture³ that the Arabic translator misunderstood οἱ Πράσινοι (a term unfamiliar to him) as some form of πράσσω—presumably οἱ πράσσοντες—which he therefore translated throughout 'the workers'. This made reasonable sense and the Ethiopic translator followed him. Thus there is no question (outside the mind of an Arabic translator whose Greek was poor) of any connection between Greens and workers. Charles' translation must be corrected: all we have is a battle between *Greens* and Blues.

Then there is the account in the *Doctrina Jacobi* of how, again during the period 609/10, the Jew Jacob set about the Blues in Rhodes together with some sailmakers (ἀρμενοράφοι) dressed as a Green.⁴ Genuine evidence of artisan hostility to Blues—but no proof that sailmakers in particular, still less artisans in general, were actually Greens. The *Doctrina* makes clear that it was for their support of Bonosus that the sailmakers were laying about the Blues, not from any general considerations of class hostility. In the anarchy of the last months of Phocas the Blues had been

¹ That is to say, the lieutenants of Phocas and Heraclius in the war of 609/10.

² Janssens (*Byzantion* 1946, 529) inserts 'i.e. the Greens' into the translation, as though it were John's own gloss; so too Vryonis, *BZ* lviii (1965), 56, n.43.

³ Tucked away cryptically in the middle of n.1 on p. 410 (530). I am most grateful to Professor Edward Ullendorff for his assistance on this point.

⁴ Ed. Bonwetsch, p. 89.25f. Papyri suggest that textile workers were of 'low economic status' (Johnson and West, *Byzantine Egypt* (1945), p. 123).

committing atrocities all over the eastern provinces. When Heraclius and Nicetas appeared as 'liberators', it was natural that those who had suffered from the Blues should turn on their oppressors for this reason alone. It would be rash to make inferences relating to the whole Empire over several centuries from events in so untypical an area as Rhodes during a civil war.

The danger of inferring even so much as a general hostility of artisans to Blues from such a text is well illustrated by the third, a passage in Malalas which shows workers *helping* Blues to burn down their own warehouses in a dockside riot at Constantinople in 562.¹ Levchenko, however,² taking the hostility of workers to Blues as proven, argued that Malalas' workers were, not ordinary artisans, but big-time industrial and commercial interests. We hardly need Levchenko's parallels to convince us that *ἐργαστηριακοί* might mean this.³ But can he really expect us to believe that industrialists help circus fans burn their own warehouses? In the context, I would suggest that it is much easier to see Malalas' *ἐργαστηριακοί* as dockers than tycoons. Not that too much should be read into what was probably in any case a very short-lived alliance. It would be very human for dockers to yield in this way to the irrational temptation of getting even with the employers who paid them so little for all their hard work. Next morning things may have looked very different.

Perhaps the most important conclusion which these passages license is one to which we have already been led by a different line of reasoning: namely, that since Byzantine writers are always so careful to distinguish the various artisan guilds from the Blues and Greens, it would seem to follow that such guilds really were distinct from the Blues and Greens. In fact, it is high time that students of early Byzantine society abandoned the meaningless and irrelevant inquiry after the factional allegiances of the guilds and began to look at the role the guilds played in their own right.

Violence from the Blues and Greens is nothing new. Far more interesting, I would suggest, to find a guild of artisans uniting to take revenge on their oppressors. S. Vryonis Jr. has written an interesting account of the role of the guilds in urban violence

¹ pp. 490-1, and see further below, p. 90.

² *Viz. Vrem.* 1947, 180-1.

³ H.-G. Beck quotes one or two cases at *BZ* lviii (1965), 21.

in the eleventh century.¹ But when he suggests that the eleventh-century guilds are in this respect the successors of the fifth- to seventh-century 'demes', the perspective may require some adjustment. We shall in Ch. X see cause to doubt whether the circus partisans had as much justification for their recourse to violence as the guilds. And the guilds were in reality far more important elements even in the sixth-century state than the circus partisans. They performed a number of vital public services (p. 119), and if they hit the headlines less than the partisans, this does not mean that they were a negligible influence on the formation and expression of popular attitudes.

They had long been a potent factor in the life of other cities, in the East and West alike. When Saint Basil was being harassed by a praetorian prefect, the people of Caesarea, 'especially the arms workers and imperial weavers . . . who draw boldness from their free way of speech', rose to his defence.² Julian was apprehensive of sedition from the 'mintworkers and public leatherworkers' of Cyzicus.³ Then there is the rebellion of the mintworkers of Rome a century earlier under Aurelian, when it was alleged that 7,000 soldiers died in the fighting.⁴ Arms workers were punished for their role in demonstrations at a Church Council held in Adrianople.⁵ Libanius several times blames the bakers of Antioch for their part in popular disturbances.⁶ The sailmakers of Rhodes call to mind the linenworkers of Tarsus, accused by Dio Chrysostom of being the 'cause of uproar and disorder'.⁷ It was the silversmiths and 'workers in allied trades' of Ephesus who caused a disturbance there during one of Saint Paul's visits.⁸

At Constantinople in April 550 partisans plundered workshops (ἐργαστήρια), no doubt those along the Mese.⁹ Much of

¹ 'Byzantine δημοκρατία and the guilds in the eleventh century', *DOP* xvii (1963), 289-314.

² Greg. Naz., *Or* xliii.57 (*PG* xxxvi.569); I am indebted here to the material collected by R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order* (1967), 174f., 341f., though see too now his *Roman Social Relations* (1974), 75f.

³ Sozomen, *HE* V.15.

⁴ See p. 191-2.

⁵ Athanasius, *Hist. Arian.* 18.

⁶ See the passages quoted by MacMullen, *Enemies . . .*, p. 343, together with Philostratus, *V. Soph.* 526, for the bakers of second-century Athens.

⁷ *Or.* xxxiv. 21f.

⁸ *Acts* 19.23f.

⁹ Malalas, *frag. Tusc.* 4 (*PG* lxxxv. 1820--a fuller version of the Oxford epitome, Bonn ed. p. 484.14; cf. too Theophanes, p. 227.7, and for a comparison of the three versions, Maricq, *BARB* 1950, p. 410, n.1).

this area had already been destroyed once by a fire started by partisans, in January 532. In view of their generally anti-social behaviour, and particularly of their indiscriminate incendiarism,¹ it is not easy to see why the guildsmen (among other duties responsible for fire-fighting) should have felt any sympathy towards or community of interest with either the Blues or the Greens.

Did circus partisans live in special areas of the city?

Manojlović himself rested his case on a minute topographical analysis designed to show that the Blues lived in the central areas of the city and the fashionable suburbs, while the Greens lived in the poor areas and outside the city. This, perhaps the most valuable and constructive part of his study,² has been elaborated (seldom for the better) by D'jakonov,³ Grégoire,⁴ and now Jarry.⁵

As formulated the case is certainly unacceptable. It is not and cannot be true that the whole of Constantinople was divided in to Blue and Green areas. There may have been one or two areas where partisans tended to live, though even this must remain very doubtful. It will be remembered that most partisans were youths, and many (like Menander Protector) will subsequently have grown out of their youthful enthusiasms. Are we to assume that they then moved house?

There is no escape from considering in turn each of the (as always rather few) texts adduced.

(A) During their remarkable dialogue with Justinian the Greens complain of a twenty-sixth murder committed in the Zeugma. 'Who slew the woodseller in the Zeugma, O Emperor?'⁶ Even granted that the other twenty-five victims were all Greens, before we could reasonably infer that the Zeugma was (a) a Green area and (b) a poor area, we should need to know two things which our text unfortunately does not tell us: (a) that all the victims actually lived in the Zeugma, and

¹ Examples collected below, pp. 276-7.

² The basic idea was already sketched out in Rambaud's *De Byz. hippodromo* (1870), p. 30—though without the social overtones.

³ *Viz. Sbornik* 1945, 188f. ⁴ *CRAI* 1946, 571f.

⁵ *Hérésies et factions* (1968), 157f.

⁶ Theophanes, p. 183.15: perhaps only the sixth murder, see de Boor's text and critical note.

(b) that the other twenty-five victims were all as humble as the twenty-sixth.

There is also another text to be taken into account:¹ according to a well-informed contemporary,² the Emperor Maurice gave his sister a mansion 'in the suburb called Zeugma'—one of a series of splendid dwellings belonging to the Crown that Maurice gave to his relatives. Hardly then a poor area. But why should so many people be killed there?³ Not, surely, because they lived there, but because it was a place where people regularly passed and met. For the Zeugma quarter bounded on the Golden Horn, embracing the area where the Galata bridge now leads across to the other side. There was a gate in the city wall here, the 'Gate of Passage', so called because it was from this point that there was a regular ferry service to Galata.⁴ This was surely how our woodseller met his assassin, arriving with his wares (which he could hardly have found *in* the Zeugma) to sell in the city. His home may well have been in Galata—traditionally (though incorrectly) considered a Blue area.

(B) The *Chronicon Paschale*⁵ records a gathering of monophysites in the forum of Constantine on 12 November 533. This was the commercial centre of the city—Manojlović himself cites evidence for the shops of bakers, bronzesmiths, moneylenders, and candlemakers⁶—and so inhabited by 'le petit peuple'. Since (as Manojlović believed) monophysites were Greens, here we have a quarter inhabited by poor Greens. Yet, quite apart from the mistaken equation of Greens and monophysites (Ch. VII), it so happens that the moneylenders and candlemakers are the two *wealthiest* guilds we know of.⁷ And the only individual partisan for whom we have a precise address, a *Blue*—Stephen, poet of

¹ Missed too by Janin in his account of the Zeugma, *Constantinople byzantine*² (1964), 441–2.

² John of Ephesus, *HE* v.18 (p. 356 Payne Smith).

³ We need not think in terms of a long series of individual assassinations: more probably most died in a couple of street battles, the Blue casualties being conveniently ignored.

⁴ *πόρτα τοῦ περάματος*, Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*², 292.

⁵ p. 629.10.

⁶ p. 647: for a fuller collection, see Janin, *op. cit.* 88f.

⁷ Some moneylenders contributed 50 lbs. of gold for a conspiracy to murder Justinian (Malalas, *Exc. de Insid.* frag. 49, pp. 173f.; Theophanes, pp. 237–8), and Justin II's wife Sophia won great popularity by dissolving all debts owed to them (Theophanes, p. 242). We hear of a candlemaker worth 100 lbs. of gold under Nicephorus I (Theophanes, pp. 487–8).

the Blues early in the seventh century—lived in the Oxeia district, not far from the forum of Constantine and only a street away from a bronzesmith.¹ There is in any case no suggestion that the monophysites of 533 *lived* near the forum, and Manojlović has forgotten that there was a Chalcedonian protest in the same spot a few years earlier in 512.² The whole house of cards collapses. There is not the slightest reason for supposing that the neighbourhood of the forum of Constantine was predominantly poor, Green, or monophysite.

(C) Another passage from the dialogue with the Emperor's Mandator: the Greens complain that they do not know where the palace is, or the 'government';³ that if they do come into the city it is sitting on a mule (alluding to the custom of prisoners being led to execution on a mule). It has been inferred that the Greens were not allowed to live in the city—or at least that they did not live in the central areas of the city.⁴

This is at once to take the Green protest altogether too seriously (the Mandator replies that they are talking nonsense)—and to misinterpret it. Such truth as there is in their exaggerated claim surely refers to the persecution the Greens were suffering from the Blues at the time. According to Procopius,⁵ the authorities were so reluctant to punish the Blues that the Greens were eventually compelled either to change sides or flee the city; those who were caught there were either killed by the Blues or punished by the authorities. This explains their absence from the city. But what of their absence from the 'government'? How can this be interpreted in terms of where they lived? The answer is that the Greens are protesting, not at their living quarters, but at being excluded from posts in the administration. Procopius tells us that Justinian gave such posts to Blues,⁶ and we know of two other Blue emperors, Marcian and Phocas, who formally banned Greens from government posts.⁷ Whether or not a substantial number of Greens really

¹ *Miracula S. Artemii* (ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Varia Graeca Sacra*, in the *Zapiski* of Saint Petersburg University, 95 (1909)), no. 21.19; on the topographical details see N. H. Baynes, *JHS* xxxi (1911), 266; P. Maas, *Byz. neugr. Jb.* i (1920), 378.

² Marcellinus, *Chron.* s.a. 512.3; Victor Tunni., *Chron.* s.a. 513.

³ *πολιτείας κατάστασις*, Theoph. p. 182.28—perhaps to be understood quite otherwise (p. 320).

⁴ Bury, *Later Roman Empire* ii¹, 55, n.5; cf. Manojlović, p. 645.

⁵ *Anecd.* vii.22.

⁶ *Anecd.* x.20.

⁷ See pp. 288-9.

were driven from the city during this exceptional period of licensed Blue terrorism, this passage is no guide to where they *normally* lived. If anything, the way they protest surely implies that they normally lived *in* the city.

(D) Two incidents concerning Blue activities in the district called Pittakia are recorded in 562 and 563. They have been conflated into one,¹ but enough details of both are known to make this improbable, and the Oxford Malalas² places the first before, the Constantinian excerpts from the original Malalas³ the second after, the moneylenders' conspiracy of November 562.

The first was a battle between rival bands of Blues in the Pittakia. A few months later a Green convicted of rape was being led through the Pittakia to execution when some Blues seized him and carried him off to sanctuary in Saint Sophia nearby. A Blue area, it is inferred: first because only Blues were involved in the first disturbance, secondly because, had it been a Green area, it would have been fellow Greens who rescued the Green rapist.⁴

The conclusion only follows if we assume what we are trying to prove: namely that all areas were either Blue or Green. There is really nothing to suggest that the Blues in question *lived* in the Pittakia—still less that *only* Blues lived there. Chance encounters in an area so near the hippodrome hardly strain belief. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Pittakia was even a residential area, much less a 'fashionable quarter' (see p. 346).

(E) In 565 some *commentarienses* were sent to arrest a young man called Caesarius in the quarter called Maxentiolus.⁵ The 'people of the neighbourhood' resisted vigorously, soldiers and guards were sent in, and a two-day battle ensued, 'with many Green casualties'. Naturally another 'Green' quarter is alleged. Yet the Greens are not mentioned till after the fighting had started. It is quite untrue that, even by implication, 'ce texte identifie en somme les gens de ce quartier avec les Verts'.⁶ Nothing can be based on the absence of the Blues, since Malalas goes on to say that they deliberately kept out of it. Nor do we

¹ Martindale, 'Public Disorders', pp. 37-8.

² p. 492.7f. Bonn.

³ Frag. 50, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 175.

⁴ So Manojlović, p. 648.

⁵ Malalas, frag. 51, *Exc. de Insid.* pp. 175-6.

⁶ Manojlović, p. 649.

know where the Maxentiolus quarter was, much less whether it was rich or poor.

Next two passages of a rather different sort. First (F) the Blues who crossed the Golden Horn from Sycae (Galata) to join in the riot of 562.¹ A fashionable 'Blue' suburb, we are told. For once it really looks as if we have the name of a place where Blues actually lived. Yet can we really believe that *only* Blues lived on the far side of the Golden Horn? Sycae was virtually a separate city, outside the walls of Constantinople; it certainly had a theatre (restored by Justinian in 528)² and no doubt also a hippodrome of its own. Shows given here would have been between Blues and Greens as in every other theatre and hippodrome of the Empire, and it is unimaginable that there were not Green partisans here as well as Blues. We may perhaps infer that the Blues who lived here in 561 were more militant than the Greens, but no more.

Then (G): later in the same year we hear that, after another clash between partisans and troops, Blues fled for refuge to the church of the Virgin in the Blachernae quarter while some Greens took shelter in the church of Saint Euphemia at Chalcedon. It may reasonably be inferred (though it does not necessarily follow) that both parties were returning to where they lived. Yet even so we can hardly believe that only Blues lived at Blachernae. And Chalcedon was a completely separate city, with at least one theatre and hippodrome of its own.³ Once again, there must have been Blues there as well as Greens.

(H) We come at last to the one text so far cited which explicitly associates a neighbourhood with one colour: Theophanes' mention of a Green attack on *γειτονία τῶν Βενέτων*, evidently an area just off the great Boulevard of the Mese, not far from its starting-point in the Augusteum square between Saint Sophia and the imperial palace. Arguably a most desirable piece of real estate, a suitable haunt for the well to do. But there is another possibility. Let us take a closer look at Theophanes' full and instructive account of the riot in question (in 561).⁴

The Greens started it by attacking the Blues. Despite an

¹ Malalas, p. 490.

² *Chron. Pasch.* p. 618.16.

³ Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*², 493-4.

⁴ pp. 235-6 de Boor.

attempt by guards to separate the combatants, the Blues occupied the Green grandstand and chanted:¹

Burn here, burn there,²
Not a Green anywhere.

The Greens replied by rushing out to the Mese and stoning all those they found in the 'neighbourhood of the Blues', crying:³

Set alight, set alight,
Not a Blue in sight.

This Blue neighbourhood was evidently very close both to the hippodrome and to the Mese. Reference to a map⁴ will show that the area between the hippodrome and the Mese⁵ was occupied by the so-called Dihippion. Now the Dihippion was an area which embraced the stables of the factions, a courtyard (ἐξάερον) where the partisans could gather for ceremonial purposes, and (either here or somewhere adjacent) the *ornatoria*, where equipment, trophies, and so forth were kept.⁶ Theodore Balsamon⁷ refers to Blue and Green 'houses' (οἴκοι) as well as stables, a word that Guillard (surely correctly) translated 'lieux de réunion'.⁸

What more natural than that the partisans should have a club-house adjoining these other more functional buildings, a place where they could hold their meetings and parties? When Theophanes says that on the following morning the Greens

¹ ἄψον ὦδε, ἄψον ἐκεῖ ὦδε Πράσινος οὐ φαίνεται (p. 236.4). An authentic acclamation, to judge from the similar Blue chant inscribed on the old base of Porphyrius (ὄλους ὦδε, ὄλους ἐκεῖ . . .): cf. Bury, *ABSA* xvii (1910/11), 93, and Maas, *BZ* xxi (1912), 34.

² The emphasis on burning confirms what we already knew from rather later sources, that the partisans sat, not on the ordinary stone benches (for the surviving examples see N. Firatli, *Ist. Ark. Müz. Yill. (Ann. Arch. Mus. of Istanbul)* xi/xii (1964), p. 201, pl. 28.2), but in elevated wooden grandstands, (cf. R. Guillard, 'Les dèmes', *Mél. L. Halphen* (1951), 297f., = *Études topogr.* i (1969), 411f.). Theophanes' term is τὰ βάρρα.

³ ἄψον, ἄψον ὦδε Βένετος οὐ φαίνεται (pp. 236-7). The rallying cry given them two lines earlier, αἱ, αἱ, ὄλοι, ὄλοι looks just as authentic: for the repeated ὄλοι compare the Porphyrius acclamation quoted above, n.1.

⁴ The fullest and best is now the one S. Miranda drew for Guillard's *Études topogr.* ii (1969).

⁵ Apart from the extremities of the palace and the bath of Zeuxippus.

⁶ See Guillard's studies in *Misc. G. Galbiati* iii (1951), 214f. (= *Ét. topogr.* ii 386f.) and *Er. Tr. Byz. Spoud.* 1950, 33f. (= *Ét. topogr.* ii.393f.).

⁷ *PG* cxxxvii.592.

⁸ *Études topogr.* ii.397; cf. LSJ s.v. οἶκος, I.3.

came back and stole 'property'¹ from the 'Blue neighbourhood', he surely means valuables from the Blue club-house rather than effects from private houses.

Since there is scarcely room for a residential quarter as well where Theophanes has so carefully directed us, why deny the obvious, that *γειτονία Βενέτων* refers to this complex of Blue public buildings? If so, then it follows that there must have been a similar Green complex next door. Green stables and an *ornatorium* were certainly there.

There are also two new texts to be added to the dossier. A certain 'most glorious Alexander', detailing in his will² a number of his residences at Constantinople and elsewhere, mentions τὸ προάστειον τὸ ἐν τοῖς Βενέτοις (*proastium, quod in Venetis est*, in the contemporary Latin version). There is no indication of its whereabouts, except that, as a well-to-do suburban estate, it must have been away from the city (of Alexander's other suburban holdings one was at Blachernae, two on the shores of the Bosphorus). 'The Blues' is not a characterization of the area or its inhabitants, but a name. There are many possible reasons why it might have been so called: it may have been the site of Blue stables or a Blue training ground. We may compare the area known as τὰ Πράσινα, 'Greens,' which the *Patria* tell us was so called because there was a Green stable there (iii. 63). It is unlikely that partisans lived in either place.

It was no doubt Theophanes' mention of a 'Blue neighbourhood' that gave rise in the first place to the idea of a whole city carved up between Blue and Green neighbourhoods.³ In reality (of course) it should have pointed to exactly the opposite conclusion. If just one area is singled out as Blue, the implication is surely that the rest of the city is *not* Blue.

At Oxyrhynchus there was a 'place' reserved for the Blues (τόπος διαφέρων τοῖς Βενέτοις), as we know from an inscribed pillar presumably erected in it.⁴ We may compare the τόπος of

¹ *ὑποστάσεις* (for other examples of this meaning in Theophanes, see de Boor's *index verb.* s.v.).

² Preserved in Justinian, *Novel* clix of 555 (for some further points about Alexander's property see my paper in *Glotta*, 1976).

³ Those who argue (or rather assume) that the *γειτονιάρχης* of the tenth-century hierarchy (p. 20) supports this conclusion have to explain why there is only one to each colour. Perhaps this official was the superintendent of the *one* area set aside for the stables, club-house and so forth.

⁴ See p. 148.

some gladiator fans of third-century Ephesus in the agora there.¹ At Heracleopolis there was a street (λαύρα) of the Blues, attested by several papyri.² It is no doubt the purest chance that no Green street has turned up yet. As at Constantinople, the implication is that the rest of both cities was *not* Blue or Green. In this respect the Blues and Greens were but two among hundreds of bodies, formal and informal, social and above all professional, with a special claim on a particular street or quarter. It is possible to compile a long list of streets and quarters in Byzantine (as in Roman) towns named after particular trades.³ The 'street of the Blues' is no doubt the Heracleopolitan equivalent to the 'place' of Oxyrhynchus, the area where the Blue club-house stood.

Thus the topography of Constantinople is no guide to the social distinctions which may or may not have existed between the Blues and the Greens. We must then interpret otherwise the Midrash which Henri Grégoire hailed as the coping-stone of Manojlović's demonstration. It will be recalled that the Blues of 'Jerusalem' consisted of king, court, and priests, and the Whites of the people of Jerusalem, while the Reds lived outside the city and the Greens in 'distant countries'.

It is difficult to see much resemblance here to Manojlović's social geography of Constantinople, crude as it is. It would be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the theory to represent the city as reserved exclusively for Blues and Whites while the Greens languished in 'distant countries'. Even Manojlović had been prepared to allow Greens into the city, provided they remained in their ghettos (in fact, of course, the Emperor himself was often a Green!). Surely the purpose of the writer was not to describe where the partisans lived, but (being himself a Blue) to illustrate in a symbolic way the superiority of Blue and White to Red and Green.

Neither Manojlović himself nor any of his followers seriously faced up to the topographical information implicit in countless passages of the *Book of Ceremonies*. It is clear that, by the tenth

¹ L. Robert, *Les Gladiateurs* (1940), no. 200, pp. 196 and 25.

² For references see p. 317.

³ A. Stöckle, *Spatrömische und byzantinische Zünfte* (*Klio*, Beih. ix, 1911), 148-152; cf. too W. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch* (1972), 56 and R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations* (1974), 132f.

century, for ceremonial purposes each major colour consisted of two parts: the 'politic' (πολιτικός) and the 'peratic' (περατικός). That is to say, those from the city proper, and those from 'the other side' (πέραν), whether from Galata (Sycæ) or Chalcedon¹. Since both Blues and Greens had a politic and peratic division, plainly there were (as suggested above, p. 90) large numbers of Blues and Greens in both the city proper and the transmarine suburbs.

The ceremonial combinations as we first meet them in the tenth century are curiously complicated. The Blues of the city were styled indifferently: 'the politic deme of the Blues' or, briefly, 'the Whites'. The 'peratic deme of the Blues' was also known just as 'the Blues'. Similarly, we find 'the politic deme of the Greens', otherwise 'the Reds'; and 'the peratic deme of the Greens', otherwise 'the Greens'.² The niceties of the development behind all this are beyond recovery (the link between minor and major colours is straightforward enough). But it is worth observing that the peratic demes were apparently bigger and certainly more important than the others, thus implying that *more* partisans of *both* major colours lived outside the city than in.

We can perhaps make a guess at the general rationale behind the basic politic/peratic division if we take another look at Malalas' helpfully circumstantial account of the riot of May 562. Blues attacked Greens on their way home after the games commemorating the foundation of the city.³ It was not till the rioting had spread to 'several places' that the Blues from Sycæ crossed over to join in. It seems a fair inference that they had not attended the celebrations in the main hippodrome—perhaps they had their own foundation games in Sycæ. Now as the role of the partisans in imperial ceremonial increased (and with their role their importance),⁴ it would be understandable if the Blues and Greens of Sycæ and Chalcedon began to resent their exclusion from the privileges of colleagues who just hap-

¹ See above, pp. 37, 90.

² For details see R. Guillard, 'Les Factions', *Επ. Βυζ. Σπουδ.* xxiii (1953), ff., cf. 'Sur les Itinéraires du Livre de Cérémonies', *Ἀθηνᾶ* lxx (1961), 74f. (= *Études topogr.* i.420f., 217f.). As always, of course, (Ch. II), the terms δῆμος and μέγος are used interchangeably in this context.

³ Held exceptionally this year on 13 instead of 11 May: Malalas, p. 490.16.

⁴ See Ch. IX.

pened to have the main hippodrome of the city as their 'home ground'.

When this development took place must remain quite uncertain. But there is no particular reason to date it late rather than early, and the solution reached must in any case reflect a long-existing situation. Thus in view of texts (F) and (G) discussed above (p. 90), we may perhaps infer that the distribution implied by the *Book of Ceremonies* goes back in its essentials to the sixth century.

The difference between Blues and Greens

The notion that even so there might be *some* sort of distinction between Blues and Greens—in behaviour if not social class—might still survive the demise of the wilder fancies chronicled above.

John the Lydian, in the course of his long tirade against Justinian's hated minister John the Cappadocian, remarks that John courted the Greens, the 'more headstrong part of the people', in a theatrical way, and he states roundly that this was because John saw them as potential allies in his designs on the purple.¹ The allegation about John's intentions we may probably ignore, but there may be something in the remark about Green behaviour (unless, of course, John the Lydian is speaking from bias as a Blue!).

This at any rate is a charge which can easily be substantiated. Of the long series of factional riots that began under Zeno and continued through the reign of Anastasius, every one for which we have any details was started by the Greens, often quite wantonly.² As early as 456 they were responsible for disorders so serious that the infuriated Marcian banned all Greens from holding posts in the administration and army for a period of three years.³

¹ *De Magg.* iii.62, p. 152.22f. Wuensch; the use of the comparative, τῆς ἀνθεστέρας μείρας τοῦ δήμου, suggests that he is opposing the Greens to the Blues, though he is careful not to name either colour: the reference does not become clear until we hear of John's στολήν ἀνθηρῶ χλοάζουσαν χρώματι revealing that he was their ἐραστής.

² Four consecutive riots at Antioch between 491 and 507 are expressly ascribed to the aggressive behaviour of the Greens: Malalas, pp. 332f. Bonn and frag. 35 *Exc. de Ins.*, pp. 166f. For Constantinople, note especially the riots of 498 and 501 (see p. 131).

³ Dated by Malalas (p. 368.18) five months before Marcian's death, i.e. 27 January 457 (Gricerson, *DOP* xvii (1962), 44).

Things changed under Justin I and Justinian, but even here, when recounting with gusto the enormities of the Blues, Procopius more than once attributes them less to Blue criminality than to the blind eye turned by the authorities.¹ The common view that Anastasius had similarly encouraged Green excesses is quite erroneous; on the contrary he always treated them with especial severity (p. 131). It really does look as if the Greens were—at least to begin with—more rowdy than the Blues. It must, however, be added that rowdiness is not (of course) a prerogative of the lower classes. The vicious but aristocratic Mohocks of early eighteenth-century London may be cited as one example out of many.

It also looks as if the Greens may have been more numerous than the Blues. It might be unwise to press our one statistic too far (1,500 Greens to 900 Blues in 602). But such other evidence as we have points in the same direction. Compare Juvenal:²

The circus throngs, and—hark! loud shouts arise—
From these, I guess the GREEN has won the prize;
For had it lost, all joy had been supprest,
And grief and horror siezed the public breast;
As when dire Carthage forced our arms to yield,
And pour'd our noblest blood on Cannae's field.

The savage hyperbole would have been pointless unless the Green fans really had been more numerous and vociferous than the Blues. Juvenal's commentators have long been aware of the remarkably close parallel in one of Cassiodorus' *Variae*: 'if the Green wins, some of the people grieve; if the Blue wins, the greater part of the city is plunged into despair'.³ Once more, the implication that Green was more popular is unmistakable.

¹ *Anecd.* vii.3-4; ix. 43-4; x.19.

² xi.197-201, after William Gifford; it need hardly be said that the last couplet does less than justice to the compression of the original ('veluti Cannarum in pulvere victis / consulibus').

³ 'transit Prasinus, pars populi maeret: praecedit Venetus, et potior turba civitatis affligitur' (*Var.* iii.51.11, p. 106.26-7 Mommsen). For *transire* in the sense 'win', cf. (in Cassiodorus) pp. 330.24; 467.8 Mommsen. *potior* (Accursius' *ed. pr.*) must be preferred to the *potius* of the MSS.—and to Mommsen's curious *ocius*: it means 'larger', as often elsewhere in the *Variae* (pp. 60.19; 223.2; 285.17; 306.15). By punctuating 'praecedit Venetus et potior, turba . . .' and presumably taking *potior* as 'superior', E. Condurachi (*Rev. Inst. du Sud-Est européen* xviii (1941), 97) infers that the Greens consisted of the lower classes. A. Fridh's new edition (*Corp. Christ.* xcvi (1973), p. 175) retains *potius* without comment.

There is another interesting parallel between the first century and the age of Cassiodorus. According to Suetonius, Vitellius had some commoners ('quosdam de plebe') executed because they had insulted the Blues (his own colour).¹ Early in the sixth century some Greens protested to King Theodoric that they were being beaten up by the slaves of some nobles. Theodoric's inquiries revealed that the Greens had been insulting the nobles in the circus.²

Now for those who were already convinced that the Blues were upper and the Greens lower class, here is confirmation that this was and always had been the case at Rome.³ But for those (like myself) who have found no real evidence for such a radical distinction, it will be obvious that here too the vital links are missing. There is nothing in Cassiodorus to suggest that the noble enemies of the humble Greens were Blues, and three other letters which allude to the same problem of senatorial retainers laying about plebeians who had insulted their masters do not assign a colour to either party.⁴ What worried Theodoric was the way senators were taking the law into their own hands: the fact that some of their victims were Greens may have been quite incidental. Since the original protests singled out two nobles by name, specific grievances against individual nobles may have been involved rather than a general 'class hostility'.

No more does it follow either that the humble slanderers of the Blue Vitellius were Greens or that they slandered him for any but personal reasons. We happen to know that Vitellius' passion for the Blues was a public joke. When people saw him on horseback in the imperial purple, they recalled the days when he was to be seen rubbing down race-horses in his Blue circus jacket.⁵ It was even alleged that he owed the command in lower Germany that gave him the purple to the influence of a Blue crony.⁶ It was no doubt this sort of gossip for which the plebeians in question were executed. They may have been Greens, but it is hardly likely that such stories were heard on Green lips alone.

¹ *Vitellius* 14.3. ² Cassiodorus, *Var.* i.27.

³ R. Goossens, *Byzantion* xiii (1938), 205f.; Condurachi, *op. cit.*; Ch. Pietri, *MEFR* lxxviii (1966), 128; P. Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages* (1970), 35-6.

⁴ *Var.* i.30, 31, 32. ⁵ Dio, lxxv.5.1.

⁶ Suetonius, *Vit.* 7.1. (the consul, T. Vinius).

Trimalchio's cook has been quoted as a typical humble Green.¹ But what of the slave Crescens, a Blue?² And what is humble about Caligula, Nero, or L. Verus, all fanatical Greens?³ Lest it be argued that they only favoured the Greens for political reasons, we happen to know (other considerations aside) that Nero had been a fan from childhood.⁴ The archetypal Green Emperor of Constantinople, Theodosius II (see p. 145), was by no means a man of lowly origin or common interests. Nor can we safely generalize from the Green bath attendant of Antioch.⁵

The fullest description we have of any group of partisans at any time or place is Procopius' *Secret History*, on the Blues of Constantinople in the 520s—one of the periods when they are popularly believed to have been most politically active. Not only is there nothing here to suggest any social distinction between Blues and Greens. On the contrary, what Procopius does say makes it clear that the excesses of the Blues were directed at rich and poor indiscriminately. We hear, for example, of their 'robbery with violence' reaching such proportions that people used to wear jewellery 'inferior to their station' to protect themselves.⁶ A lady of fashion⁷ *en route* for her suburban villa was driven to suicide by lustful Blues. And the slaves who forced their mistresses to 'acts against their will' will not, I hope, be used to support Pigulewskaja's claim that the Blues also included Blue 'dependants'⁸. Procopius'⁹ claim that Justinian confiscated estates on the pretext that the owner was a Green implies through the hyperbole that the idea of a rich landowner being a Green was not an absurdity.

Our only other authority for this wave of Blue violence is in complete accord with these inferences from Procopius. Accord-

¹ Petronius, *Sat.* 70.10, cf. Goossens, *op. cit.*

² *CIL* vi.9719.

³ Note the way that G. Picard takes the Blue = aristocratic equation for granted when he remarks of the décor of a villa at Carthage conspicuous for its representation of Blue racehorses that it is 'inspiré d'un esprit nettement conservateur et traditionaliste' (*CRAI* 1964, 115). I venture to doubt whether we shall find 'modern art' in 'Green' villas, if any are ever discovered.

⁴ Suetonius, *Nero* 22.

⁵ Malalas, frag. 35, *Exc. de Ins.* p. 166.36.

⁶ *Anecd.* vii.15.

⁷ *Ibid.* vii.37, γυνή μία κόσμον περιβεβλημένη (μία = *quædam*—a medieval usage—Herwerden, for the MSS. μὴ, preferable to Comparetti's μὴ <νέα>), quoted by Wirth in his addenda to the reprint of Hauray's text).

⁸ *Ibid.* vii.43; Pigulewskaja, *Byzanz auf den Wegen nach Indien* (1969), 43.

⁹ *Anecd.* xix.11.

ing to Malalas,¹ at this period the Blues 'used to attack the authorities of the city'. Now quite apart from the fact that on the traditional view these 'authorities' (especially under an allegedly 'Blue' regime) are supposed to have been Blues themselves, the very idea of Blues consistently attacking the governing class 'in all the cities' is itself irreconcilable with the traditional view.

It has often been claimed that 'patrons' are only attested for the Greens—an indication (it is alleged) that they were humble folk in need of protection.² It should be clear from Ch. I (p. 20) that this is quite the wrong way to look at the figure of the patron. It was because an internal dissension among the Greens—nothing more important than the merits of rival pantomimes—was endangering law and order that Theodoric invited two aristocrats to take over their 'patrocinium', to settle the matter impartially³. Nothing here or in the Constantinopolitan examples to suggest that Green patrons saw themselves as champions of the oppressed. Nor is it even true that there were no Blue patrons. Damianus is expressly described as patron of the Blues at Tarsus⁴ under Justinian, and there are two more likely cases at Didyma, not to mention Justinian himself at Constantinople.⁵

It was suggested earlier that there was a sense in which the Blues and Greens of the late Empire superseded a multitude of other young men's sporting and social organizations. Now many of these, in particular the *iuvenes* and *neoi*, tended to be socially exclusive.⁶ By no means restricted to the aristocracy, but not opening their doors readily to the lower orders. The occasional admission of a famous pantomime of servile birth is the sort of exception that proves the rule⁷.

Now the Blues and Greens, being spectators rather than actors, were not on all fours with the *neoi* and *iuvenes*, and it is

¹ Malalas, p. 416.5f. (τοῖς κατὰ πόλιν ἄρχουσιν).

² e.g. Maricq, *BARB* xxxvi (1950), 419, n.1.

³ Cassiodorus, *Var.* i.20; cf. i.32 and 33.

⁴ Procopius, *Anecd.* xxxi.33. ⁵ See p. 22 above.

⁶ cf. C.A. Forbes, *Neoi* (1933), and M. Jaczynowska, 'Les Organisations de Iuvenes et l'aristocratie municipale', *Recherches sur les structures sociales dans l'antiquité classique* (1970), 265f.

⁷ J.-P. Morel, 'Pantomimus allectus inter iuvenes', *Hommages M. Renard* ii (1969), 525-35.

likely that in the early days both colours were full of the lower orders (slaves not excluded), Trimalchio's cook and the oil-seller Crescens alike. But as they increased in importance, becoming actors of a different sort, in the ceremonial of the hippodrome, it would not be surprising if the bath attendant and the wood-seller had become less typical representatives of the circus partisan.

Menander Protector's autobiographical preface¹ is illuminating here. Menander's father, though uneducated, evidently made enough money to save his sons from anything so distasteful as work. Menander himself studied for the bar, but could not face the boredom of practice. So he abandoned himself to the 'tumults of the colours' (θόρυβοι τῶν χρωμάτων). The guards commission his title implies cannot have taken up much of his time, for he mentions no military duties interfering with what he himself looked back on as a life of uninterrupted pleasure, before he betook himself in a fit of remorse to the writing of history. Agathias, whose history Menander continued, comments on the devotion of the partisans to what may aptly be translated 'la dolce vita' (ἀβροδίαιτοι).² Then there are the fancy clothes they wore. It may well be that (as Procopius alleges)³ some stole to buy such finery—but hardly all. Elsewhere Procopius himself remarks on the money they spent.⁴ By the last quarter of the century we find Tiberius II moved to legislate against the extravagance of the partisans. He discovered that they were wearing qualities of purple reserved for the imperial family.⁵

None of these passages singles out one colour rather than another, and it would be preposterous to maintain that only the Blues were meant. There are in fact two rather interesting texts which apply to the Greens alone: Marcian's ban on the holding of all civil and military offices by the Greens, and its reissue a century and a half later by Phocas.⁶ For what was evidently intended as a drastic punishment to have any bite it must have been normal for large numbers of Greens to hold such offices. The popular notion that courtiers and civil servants were solidly Blue is as baseless as all such generalizations.

¹ *FHG* iv.201–2.

² *Hist.* v.14.4.

³ *Anecd.* vii.12.

⁴ *BP* i.24.2.

⁵ Cedrenus i.688. 19f.: cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 257, n.2.

⁶ Malalas, p. 368–15; Theophanes, p. 297.5; see p. 289 below.

Of course none of the texts cited in the last few pages has any direct bearing on the social *class* of partisans (though some might lend support to the suggestion that Greens were more turbulent). What they do imply is that, whatever differences in behaviour and even social class there may have been, partisans of both colours really moved in much the same world: young men with time on their hands—the *jeunesse dorée* rather than a representative cross section of the whole population.

Pigulewskaja drew a basic distinction between the 'rank and file' and the 'leadership' of the colours.¹ She would thus have been able to dismiss the dandies characterized above as 'leadership', and shrug off as irrelevant the fact that at this level a Blue might be indistinguishable, socially speaking, from a Green.

There is not the slightest reason for believing in any such distinction. The Blues and Greens characterized above were the only real Blues and Greens there ever were. We have seen already that, though Procopius does say that everybody was either a Blue or a Green, he at once qualifies this generalization by repeatedly distinguishing between the partisans proper and the 'silent majority' of those who simply happened to support those colours in the contests of hippodrome and theatre (p. 75). Furthermore, he makes it clear that this majority lived in dread of the activities of the partisans. In what sense then can it be said that, outside the sporting sphere, Blue and Green partisanships extended to the whole or even a significant proportion of the population?

Blue and Green 'policies'

The question of the social origin of the Blues and Greens would not in itself be particularly important. What does matter is the further assumption of modern scholars that the policies of the emperors themselves were directly affected by the circus colour they favoured².

The oversimplification involved is breathtaking. Most emperors in the early Byzantine period seem to have favoured one colour or the other. Yet how many consistently favoured one

¹ *Byzanz auf den Wegen nach Indien* (1969), 44.

² Jarry goes furthest in this direction. 'Blue' emperors tended to be more European in outlook, concerned with the Balkans and Italy, while 'Green' emperors were more dependant on Africa and the East . . . (*Hér. et factions*, 186f.)!

social class rather than another? Social prejudice could never have been more than one of the multitude of conflicting pressures brought to bear on a late Roman emperor.

The two examples which have been quoted as though they stood for all the rest are Anastasius and Justinian, potentially the most favourable examples in view of the length and documentation of both reigns. Yet neither fits the theory under discussion.

Anastasius' policies have usually been considered classically Green.¹ It is thus unfortunate that he should turn out not to have been a Green.² It has recently been argued that these policies reveal him rather as a Blue.³ Alas! He was a Red. There is no point in invoking the links between the major and minor colours here, since the whole point of Anastasius reserving his favours for the Reds was precisely to leave him a free hand with both the major colours (p. 72).

The case of Justinian is more disastrous still to the traditional view. For by any reasonable assessment the policies of this aggressively Blue emperor are positively 'Green'; few emperors were more feared and detested by the upper classes than Justinian. By a curious stroke of perversity this uncomfortable fact has been stood on its head, through the expedient of attributing the policies in question to the influence of John the Cappadocian.

Now in the person of John it might well seem that we have a perfect illustration of Manojlović's thesis: a man of indisputably low birth, who paraded his Green sympathies, and whose legislative activity as praetorian prefect was notable for measures which in one way or another taxed the existing resources of the propertied classes or obstructed their acquisition of more. Furthermore, John was no sycophant; alone among Justinian's ministers he spoke out openly and firmly against the projected Vandal war. There might indeed seem a *prima facie* case for regarding him as a 'Green influence' in a 'Blue government'.⁴

¹ e.g. J. Lindsay, *Byzantium into Europe* (1952), 11 ('under him Green policy reached its climax . . .'); P. J. Alexander, *The Sybil of Baalbek* (1969), 97.

² Malalas, p. 393.

³ Jarry, *Syria* xxxvii (1960), at pp. 351-5.

⁴ Even the sober Stein succumbed to temptation here: cf. *BZ* xxx (1929/30), 378, and *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 436.

Yet the temptation must be resisted. For John's policies were issued as laws under Justinian's name, and if Justinian had not approved, they would never have been issued. It is in fact clear that Justinian thoroughly approved of John's administration. After being forced to sacrifice him to popular outcry in 532, Justinian reappointed him a few months later for an unparalleled further tenure of a decade.¹ The two men may not have agreed on all things, but it is hard to see an ideological gulf between them. Nor was Justinian's hostility to the aristocracy restricted to measures prompted by John; the means whereby he possessed himself of senatorial wealth are a constant theme of the *Secret History*.² We are left with the paradox that the most consistently anti-senatorial policies pursued by any late Roman government were put into effect by a Blue Emperor.

There is a further point. Procopius blames the Blue excesses of the 520s directly on Justinian. Yet, much as he no doubt exaggerated Justinian's responsibility, the one thing he never even hints at is that Justinian used the Blues in the furtherance of any of the other nefarious practices with which he is accused on every page of the *Secret History*. If there had been any serious reason of policy or personal advancement for Justinian letting Blues terrorize Greens, how could Procopius have failed to exploit it?

The truth is (of course) that Blues hated Greens, not because they were lower-class or heretics—but simply because they were Greens. Why then, if the emperors did not exploit factional rivalry for their own ends, *did* they favour one colour rather than another? 'On peut s'étonner', wrote Alfred Rambaud a century ago,³ 'que ces princes qui, à chaque émeute des factions risquaient leur couronne et leur vie, n'aient pas eu la sagesse de cacher leurs sympathies ou leurs antipathies, au lieu de mettre l'empire en danger pour une casque de cocher.' If this is what really happened, then astonishment would indeed be in order. The truth is that the factional sympathy of the emperor was neither so all-important as moderns have argued nor quite so frivolous as Rambaud imagined—though Rambaud was at

¹ Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 784.

² e.g. viii.9-11; xi.40-1; xii.3-12; xiii.20-22; xix.11-12, 17; xxi.20-22.

³ 'Le Monde byzantin: le sport et l'hippodrome à Constantinople', *Revue des deux mondes* xciv (1871), 764.

least nearer the mark. The colour itself did not matter. What did was that the emperor should favour *a* colour, any colour, to demonstrate himself the *civilis princeps*, the ruler who did not disdain the pleasures of his people.

If this explanation (set in a fuller perspective below, pp. 179–183) seems inadequate for what has seemed to be a determining factor in the policy of three centuries and more of Byzantine emperors, it cannot be too emphatically stated: (a) that no source of any period attributes a *serious* motive to the factional sympathy of any emperor; and (b) that Justinian is the *only* emperor alleged to have even tolerated, much less encouraged the misdemeanours of his favourite colour.

The notion that there was a constant state of (at least cold) war between the emperor and the colour he did not support must be abandoned. For example, the constant changes of colour by Porphyrius during much of the riot-infested reigns of Anastasius and Justinian show that there was not even any attempt to secure a monopoly of the best charioteers for the emperor's own faction (which must often therefore have lost). Then there are the factional acclamations preserved in the *Parastaseis Syntomai Chronikai*. Jarry assumed that (e.g.) a Green acclamation addressed to Leo I would automatically prove him Green.¹ In fact, of course, *both* colours addressed acclamations to all emperors every race day and on countless other occasions (Ch. IX), and not even Justinian would have been boorish and tactless enough to refuse this courtesy (as happens to be illustrated by a Green acclamation to him in this very collection).

Many other examples could be cited, but it will be enough to conclude with the naming and renaming of members of the imperial family (pp. 143f). It would seem to follow from the particularly fierce rivalry this gave rise to that, even in so relatively minor a matter, it was by no means a foregone conclusion that the emperor would adopt the name proposed by his own colour.

In general, I would suggest that the emperor's partisanship was not so very different from, indeed (if he was wise) more restrained than that of his subjects.

¹ See p. 334.

V. The Military Role of the Factions

THE notion that the factions constituted a regular armed militia goes back to Rambaud's usually sensible monograph of 1870—and beyond.¹ It was refined and developed by Uspenskij² (whose views, though published in Russian, were soon popularized by Bury)³ and then pushed to its extreme by Manojlović,⁴ whose conclusions have in their essentials held the field ever since.⁵ It seems to me that this picture has been vastly overdrawn, and seen out of both context and perspective.

First and most obviously, the conventional view leans heavily on the hypothesis of the 'demes' as municipal units among which the whole citizen body was divided. Manojlović saw a citizen militia enrolled on a regional basis—the regions being the 'demes'. The registers (χάρται) mentioned by Simocatta (see p. 23) were the military rolls of all the 'demes', just as in fifth-century (B.C.) Athens. Indeed, Manojlović produced the following elaborate definition of δῆμος as used in military contexts:⁶ 'La population d'une circonscription citadine, ou la circonscription elle-même, considérée du point de vue civil, et aussi du point de vue militaire, milice citadine ou bataillon de milice citadine.' Thus for Manojlović as for most scholars, the factions formed *the* citizen militia of Constantinople. But now we have seen that the 'demes' are a chimera, with them go the 'deme-registers' and the locally enrolled militia. The most that can be said is that the factions constituted *a* small (and

¹ *De byzantino hippodromo* (1870), 31f.

² *Viz. Vrem.* i (1894), 1f.

³ Appendix 10 to volume iv of his edition of Gibbon.

⁴ *Byzantion* xi (1936), 628f.

⁵ To give just a selection of more recent works: G. Downey, *Constantinople in the Age of Justinian* (1960), 39; F. Dölger, *IIAPΑΣΠΙΟΠΑ* (1961), 130f.; J. V. A. Fine Jr., *Sborn. Rad. Viz. Inst.* x (1967), 29f.; M. Maclagan, *The City of Constantinople* (1968), 43; G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*³ (1968), 66; A. N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (1968), 9–10; R. Guiland, *BS* xxx (1969), 6f. E. Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 537, n.3, and H.-G. Beck, *BZ* 1965, 37, n.75, had one or two reservations, but the only real note of scepticism known to me was sounded by J. R. Martindale, 'Public Disorders' (1960), 95–7.

⁶ *Byzantion* xi (1936), 631.

unreliable) paramilitary body, based not (of course) on the municipal organization of Constantinople as a whole, but on their own natural focus in the hippodrome.

Perhaps the most important single objection to the extreme formulation of the conventional view is the simple fact that we never hear of the factions performing any regular military duties. Manojlović's suggestion that the 'demesmen of both factions' who accompanied Heraclius on an embassy were a military guard has been shown above (p. 47) to be entirely without foundation or probability. We may dispatch with equal confidence his even more extreme claim that by the end of Justinian's reign the factions could put a brigade of trained cavalry in the field.

According to Theophanes,¹ when the Cotrigur Huns descended on a defenceless Constantinople in 559, Belisarius in desperation 'commandeered every horse, royal horses [that is to say those from the emperor's stables], circus horses, those of the holy houses [monasteries, hospitals etc]² and of every individual who owned a horse'. Manojlović claims³ that this 'hippodrome cavalry' must have had some sort of regular organization and training before the event or it would have been unable to fight effectively. But the whole point is that it *was* an untrained rabble that won for Belisarius this his last and most remarkable victory. Agathias says that apart from barely 300 of Belisarius' own veterans, 'the remainder was a completely unarmed and unwarlike mob'. Three pages earlier, when criticizing Justinian for running the regular forces down to such a dangerously low level, Agathias specifically remarks that he had squandered military funds on 'loose women and charioteers', 'dandies unfit for all serious matters, brave only in civil disturbances and the rivalry of the colours'.⁵ It would be the wildest special pleading to interpret this as a hostile reference to money being spent on building the factions up into a militia. For Agathias is plainly *contrasting* the squabbles of the factions over charioteers and dancing girls with soldiers able to defend the city.

All Belisarius did was to requisition every horse he could find

¹ p. 233.20 de Boor.

² *εὐαγεῖς οἴκοι* is a technical term in this sense: cf. Bury, *Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (1911), 94.

³ Op. cit. p. 627.

⁴ v.16.2.

⁵ v.14.4.

in the city—as shown by the conclusion to Theophanes' list. There will have been several hundred horses in the stables of the hippodrome, and, though trained for another purpose, at a pinch (and this was a crisis) they would have made a good nucleus for a makeshift cavalry—not necessarily (of course) ridden by their usual charioteers and grooms.

To the best of our knowledge the only even quasi-military function the factions ever performed was to man the walls when danger threatened—only to desert them when it arrived. They are recorded as doing this (or at least being told to do it) sufficiently often to suggest that it was their only such function. An important function, to be sure, but not one that required trained soldiers. Nor is there any reason to suppose even that the factions were the only citizens public-spirited enough to lend a hand in time of danger.

But before proceeding any further let us briefly review, in chronological order, the evidence relating to military activity on the part of the factions.

(1) First an example which, despite its importance, has escaped the notice of previous inquirers. A group of five epigrams from one of the monuments erected to Porphyrius mention among more conventional eulogies the part that both he and the Greens played in the suppression of a 'tyrant'.¹ Since Porphyrius' career began about 500 and there is mention of a sea-battle, there can be little doubt that the 'tyrant' in question is Vitalian, finally defeated (at sea) by Anastasius in 515. Porphyrius is described in the epigrams as a 'warrior' (*ἀριστεύς, πολέμων πρόμαχος*). The Greens are referred to loosely as the Emperor's 'servants' (*ὑποεργοί*). Later practice suggests that they did no more than man the walls in case Vitalian should actually attack the city, but once his fleet had been defeated they may have taken part in the pursuit on the Galata side of the Golden Horn. Our other accounts² say nothing of any civilian participation, and since our two fullest come from John Malalas and John of Antioch, who usually have so much to say about the factions, it does not look as if they can have played a very significant role. It is particularly unfortunate that we have no information beyond the hints of the epigrams, since this is

¹ *A. Pal.* xv.50, *A. Plan.* 347-50, with the discussion in *Porphyrius*, pp. 125f.

² For the sources see Bury, *LRE* i² 451-2.

by ninety years the earliest example we have of the factions playing a military role at Constantinople.

(2) Procopius records that the core of the resistance to the Persians at Antioch in 540 was, after the regular soldiers, a band of 'young men of the people'.¹ Fighting shy, as usual, of technical terms, he does not use the words *δήμοι* or *μέρη*, but his explanatory gloss 'those who used to fight each other in the hippodromes' leaves no doubt about their identity.

(3) A large part has been claimed for the factions in the saving of Constantinople from the Cotrigurs in 559. We have full accounts by Agathias (probably present in the city himself at the time) and Theophanes.² Both emphasize how few trained soldiers there were, but neither mentions the factions. With Manojlović's 'hippodrome cavalry' gone (p. 106) and Theophanes' phrase *ἐδημότευσε* interpreted aright (p. 120), there is no evidence that they played any part at all.

(4) Theophanes records that 'the demes' manned the Long Walls when an Avar attack threatened in 583.³ We also have a contemporary account by Simocatta,⁴ from which it is clear that Theophanes' narrative depends. Simocatta mentions the Emperor's guards, but says nothing of the 'demes'. Since he does mention two cases of their use later in Maurice's reign (5) and (6) below), the source of Theophanes' error is clear. The very fact that Simocatta mentions the use of factions in only two out of three parallel cases suggests that Maurice did not use them the first time.

(5) In 601 the Long Walls were defended by the emperor's guards (the excubitors) and a special levy of infantry which *included* (but did not consist exclusively of) some circus partisans (see p. 121). In the event the Avars and Maurice came to a peaceful settlement and the factions did not have to fight.⁵

(6) With his army in revolt under Phocas, Maurice sent the

¹ *BP* ii.8.11 and 17.

² Agathias' version is tendentious and by no means to be preferred to Theophanes' at every point: see Averil Cameron, *Agathias*, 1970, 49-50.

³ p. 254.7 de Boor.

⁴ i.7.2; I take the opportunity of making a minor correction in the text here: for *τὰς περὶ αὐτόν . . . πληθὺς* read *τὰς περὶ αὐτόν*, i.e. Maurice himself. For the contracted form of the pronoun in a parallel context cf. Procopius, *Anecd.* vii.42, *πολλοὺς μὲν ἀμφ' αὐτόν εἶχε*.

⁵ Simocatta, vii.15.7., copied again by Theophanes, p. 279.18.

factions to man the city walls. Before Phocas had a chance to attack they deserted their posts and fell to rioting.¹

(7) Faced with a similar situation Phocas in turn entrusted the defence of part of the city (the harbours of Sophia and Caesarius and the Palace of Hormisdas) to the factions. Long before Heraclius attacked the Greens deserted their posts.²

(8) 'The analogy of the 'young men' of Antioch in 540 might seem to suggest that the 'young people of the city' who (according to Sebeos' *History of Heraclius*)³ played a part in the defence of Jerusalem in 614, may likewise have been circus partisans. Yet the complementary (and less flattering) eye-witness picture of Blue and Green activity there at this time from a monk of Mâr Sabas makes it clear that they were in no sense an official militia. He describes them as 'wicked men', at one time driven out of Jerusalem for their crimes, only to return just in time to throw the city into confusion at this critical moment.⁴

The evidence suggests that by the early seventh century the factions were *among* those regularly called upon to defend the city, though it can hardly be said that they performed this duty very satisfactorily. Before then, except for the isolated case of 515, the evidence is at best inconclusive. This might be due to no more than a gap in our information, though it could be that the danger to Constantinople did not seem serious enough to warrant regular provisions for the mobilization of a civilian militia till the seventh century.

There is much more evidence of the inconclusive variety,⁵ but I have not thought it worth while chronicling cases where we are told only that 'the people' or 'the citizens' protected themselves. Such tales of heroism are worth recording, to be sure, but not in a history of the circus factions.

They have been put there by scholars in the mistaken belief that the story of the factions *is* the story of the people, both the

¹ Simocatta, vii.9.1, Theophanes, pp. 287f.

² John of Antioch, *frag.* 110, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 150 de Boor.

³ §24, p. 68, trans. F. Macler (1904).

⁴ 'Antiochus Strategus' (in fact a monk called Strategius, or possibly Eustratius: cf. P. Peeters, *Mél. Univ. S. Joseph* ix (1923/4), 8-10), in the translation of F. C. Conybeare, *EHR* xxv (1910), 503.

⁵ Manojlović, *Byzantion* xi (1936), 623-4; Dölger, *ΠΑΡΑΣΠΟΡΑ* (1961), 130; Guiland, *BS* xxx (1969), 8-9.

people in general and in particular the people as a militia (the fallacy of the 'deme-based' militia).

Yet from the late third century on, when the security of the Roman world was shaken, never entirely to recover, there is abundant evidence from all over the Empire (though especially from the eastern provinces) of ordinary people defending their towns and cities against invaders and brigands.¹ Nor is the evidence literary alone. City walls were thrown up everywhere, often in haste. The massive Theodosian walls of Constantinople are but the most striking extant example of a widespread and radical change in the style of city life under the Empire.² Someone must have manned such walls, and there cannot have been enough soldiers to man them all.

As time passed we find the independent military camps of earlier times retreating inside the cities,³ so that there often was a military garrison (of sorts) to stiffen the defence. But among all this material, both literary and archaeological, there is not one scrap of evidence at any place or any time to suggest that it was (as Manojlović and his followers maintain) the circus factions who formed the trained and armed nuclei for such civilian militias. Indeed, there is little enough evidence for associating them with such activity at all. Outside Constantinople the only occasion where they are even mentioned in this context is at Antioch in 540.

There is a sense in which the citizen militia of Constantinople can be traced back to 378. When Valens was proposing to denude the city of all troops for what was to be the fateful battle of Adrianople, the people assembled in the hippodrome called upon him to arm them so that they would not be left defenceless. Valens refused, but after his defeat the citizens armed themselves and drove away all barbarians who approached the city.⁴ Again in 400 the people took up arms to expel the unhappy Gainas and his fellow Goths.⁵ It has generally been

¹ R. MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* (1963), 129f., Fergus Millar, 'Dexippus and the Third Century Invasions', *JRS* lix (1969), 26-9.

² See especially MacMullen, *op. cit.* 131f., and for an exhaustive collection of evidence, D. Claude, *Die byzantinische Stadt im 6. Jahrhundert* (Byz. Archiv xiii, 1969), 15-18. One might add the attention devoted by the Anonymus *περί στρατ.* 12-13 (ed. Koehly/Rüstow, *Gr. Kriegsschr.* II 2 (1855), pp. 72-8) to the building and defending of city walls.

³ MacMullen again, p. 132.

⁴ Socrates, *HE* iv.38-v.1.

⁵ For the sources, Bury, *LRE* i², 134, n.2.

assumed that a portion of the civilian population remained permanently under arms thereafter, a trained nucleus for such emergency mobilizations. This is possible, certainly, but there is no evidence whatever and it does not seem especially likely. What is wholly without either foundation or justification is the further assumption that this hypothetical armed portion of this hypothetical civilian militia consisted of the circus factions.

Consider, for example, the fifth Novel of Valentinian III, issued in 440 at a Rome that had to face the danger of an enemy army at its walls. Valentinian gives an assurance that no private citizen or guild-member of Rome is to be liable for military service—but he adds that they must be prepared to man the walls and gates if necessary: ‘Cognoscat universitas nullum de Romanis civibus, nullum de corporatis ad militiam esse cogendum, sed tantum ad murorum portarumque custodiam, quoties usus exegerit.’¹ Two points emerge: (a) manning the walls (all that the factions are ever recorded doing) is evidently not counted as ‘militia’ proper, but (b) is a normal civil obligation both on guildsmen and individual private citizens.

Valentinian further adds that all citizens are to lend a hand should it be necessary to repair the walls (‘a reparatione murorum . . . nullus penitus excusetur’). This is particularly relevant, in that (according to Pseudo-Codinus) 8,000 Greens and Blues collaborated in the rebuilding of the Theodosian wall after the earthquake of 447.² Manojlović takes these 8,000 men to be his armed militia.³ Yet not even the comically unreliable Pseudo-Codinus makes any mention of arms, and repairing walls (as we have seen) was a standard obligation on all citizens. Even if the number is trustworthy (which is more than doubtful), there is no ground whatever for seeing these 8,000 as anything but circus fans, whose services the city prefect was able to call upon for this special purpose by some such law as the Novel of Valentinian. In any case, it stands to reason that the walls cannot have been repaired by circus fans *alone*. However good their intentions, however strenuous their efforts, dandies of the hippodrome can hardly have been so well suited to such work as

¹ Valentinian III, *Nov.* v. 3.

² *Patria Cpoleos*, ed. Preger, p. 182.10f.

³ *Byzantion* xi (1936), 622.

the artisan guilds of the city, and it passes belief that the guildsmen did not shoulder the lion's share.¹

The only text we possess that specifically mentions contingency provisions for mobilizing what might be called the civilian militia of Constantinople comes in a curious treatise ascribed to Constantine Porphyrogenitus,² but probably in fact from the pen of one Leo Katakylas, magister of Leo VI (886–912). The provisions described therein are ascribed to Constantine I, an attribution which can hardly have been intended seriously. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in a treatise of his own which is an expanded and improved version of Leo Katakylas',³ dates the material it contains not earlier than the Isaurian dynasty (717–802), adding that the ceremonial was still in use up to Michael III (842–67). It may be that 'Constantine I' in fact disguises Constantine V (741–75), who certainly had reason to fear invasion of his capital (from the Bulgars) while he campaigned in the East. The sensible practice described may well be much earlier than this though it would be idle to guess how much earlier.⁴

When going on an expedition, we are told, which entailed the withdrawal of his personal guards from the city, 'Constantine'

¹ The guild of butchers helped to restore the walls of Tomis at the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century: D. Claude, *Die byzantinische Stadt* (1969), 28.

² *De Caer.* 449–50 Bonn.

³ Leo's treatise is printed at *Caer.* 444–54 in the Bonn edition, Constantine's at 455–508. Bury argued that 444–54 is simply a part of the longer work (*EHR* xxii (1907), 439), but what part, since it contains nothing not fully covered in 455–508 (which has every appearance of being complete)? At 457.13f. Constantine describes how he had searched high and low for a work on campaign ceremonial, and at last found one in the monastery of Sigriane (200 miles from Constantinople; cf. N. G. Wilson, *GRBS* 1967, 56), by Leo, which he claimed to have expanded, improving also on its deplorable style. Since *Caer.* 455–508 is basically an expansion (with a few additions) of 444–54, and since in addition 444–54 is (as Dain observed) 'en langue commune', it seems most economical to assume that 444–54, is Leo's book. It is hardly surprising that Constantine should have filed it together with his own work—or that both should subsequently have been copied out consecutively. 444–54 is also preserved at the beginning of a collection of strategical works in Laur. lv.4, probably prepared to the orders of Constantine: cf. A. Dain *Travaux et mémoires* ii (1967), 361, 382–3. Dain, like Bury, assumed it to be from Constantine's own hand. The suggestion that it is actually Leo's work I owe to James Howard-Johnston, who will be justifying it fully elsewhere. For an entertaining characterization of both treatises see now A. J. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World* (1973), 196–200.

⁴ Taking Leo's words at face value, Guiland rashly (and implausibly) writes that 'il existait déjà, à l'époque de Constantin I . . .' (*BS* 1969, 7).

would instruct his 'deputy'¹ to review the manpower at his disposal, those (a) 'under the *tagmata* of the city', and (b) 'under the city prefect', and assign them posts for the defence of the city in the event of a surprise attack. Those 'under the city prefect', as has long been seen, are (in addition to his own extensive staff) the city guilds.² The other group has usually been identified as the circus factions.³

It is true, as we shall see, that the factions did have a connection with the *tagmata* (the military units stationed in the capital), though it is questionable how far back it goes and what it implies (p. 116). And if this body 'under the *tagmata*' consisted exclusively or even predominantly of the factions, why does Leo call them by another name?

A page later there is a description of 'Constantine's' departure from the city to the cheers of the same two bodies, those 'under the city prefect' and what is now styled bluntly 'the army of the city' (ὁ τῆς πόλεως στρατός).⁴ Once more, on the traditional view, the factions. Yet in Constantine VII's own treatise,⁵ when the emperor returns to the city, the part played by the factions in greeting him is described quite openly under their own names. The implication is that they are *not* identical with this 'army of the city'. It is in any case very improbable that, in the light of a few semi-military obligations which might (or might not) arise two or three times in a century, the factions should actually have been called an *army*. In the *Book of Ceremonies* Constantine VII is very careful always to distinguish the factions from soldiers proper.⁶ In particular, he distinguishes them from the *tagmata*: the protocol for the naming of an Emperor's son lays down that 50 representatives from the *tagmata*, 50 from the factions (δημόται), and 50 ordinary citizens (πολίται) are to take part. The lists of faction officials given by both Constantine VII and Philotheus contain no military titles.

But for this unfounded modern dogma about the 'deme-militia', the true identity of this 'army of the city' would have

¹ τὸν ἐκ προσώπου, a technical term of the later period: Bury, *Imperial Administrative System*, p. 46.

² S. Vryonis Jr., *DOP* xvii (1963), 295, n. 19a, citing M. Siuziumov, *Viz. Vrem.* iv (1951), 40.

³ e.g. from Rambaud, *De byz. hippodromo* (1870), 34 to Guiland, *BS* xxx (1969), 7.

⁴ *De Caer.* 450.18f. Bonn. ⁵ *De Caer.* 500-1.

⁶ *De Caer.* 226.3 (καὶ τὰ μέρη καὶ οἱ τῆς πόλεως καὶ τὰ στρατεύματα), cf. 617.11f.

been perceived long ago. The traditional interpretation entails the assumption that *both* the bodies mentioned by Constantine VII are civilian. This is surely incredible. No responsible emperor would have left his capital without *any* trained soldiers to defend it. Compare the protests of the people when Valens left them defenceless in 378, and the reproaches levelled at Justinian for running down the defences in 559. It is impossible to believe that 'Constantine' would actually have recommended that the city be left entirely in the hands of civilians.

In the tenth century (the true background to Constantine's treatise) the military troops stationed in the capital comprised: (a) the *scholae* (schools), excubitors, *arithmos*, and *hikanatoi*, known collectively as the *tagmata*; and (b) the *numeri* and *teichistai*.¹ The term *tagmata* is sometimes used loosely to include the *numeri* (though never apparently the *teichistai*), but there can be no question that the four *tagmata* proper, mounted guards whose duty was to protect the emperor's sacred person, were reckoned superior to the two other corps, humble infantrymen whose only function was to defend the city. For it is clear that, whereas the four *tagmata* accompanied the Emperor wherever he went, the *numeri* and *teichistai* always remained in the city². Hence (of course) the name 'teichistai' and the title of their commander, count (later domestic) of the Walls.³ Hence too the fact that the domestics of the *numeri* and the Walls alone of all the military commanders of Constantinople have *portarii* (πορτάριοι) on their staff. They are no more than names in the *Kletorologion* of Philotheus to us, but it is an obvious guess that they were the officers in charge of the various gates along the Long Walls.⁴

If, as Stein has suggested, the 'numbers' (ἀριθμοί) mentioned by Theophanes as guarding the gates of the Theodosian Wall after the Long Walls had fallen in 559 are indeed the later *numeri*⁵ (or at least their ancestors), then we would have con-

¹ Bury, *Imperial Administrative System*, 47f.: see too H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, 'Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire Byzantin aux ix^e-x^e siècles', *BCH* lxxxiv (1960), 29, 55f., and Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus* (1973), 285f.

² *De Caer.* 524.19f., cf. Bury, *Imperial Administrative System*, p. 48.

³ Bury, *op. cit.* p. 67.

⁴ *De Caer.* 719.5 and 10 = Bury, *op. cit.*, p. 141.14 and 22: cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 537, n.3.

⁵ p. 233.17 de Boor, with Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii.537, n.3.

tinuity in both name and function right back to the sixth century. There was a *vicarius* of the Long Walls (a post still in existence in the tenth century) as early as 535,¹ and it is logical to ascribe his creation to Anastasius, who built the Walls.² Extending as they did over 41 miles from the Sea of Marmara to the Black Sea some 40 miles west of the city, they could hardly have been manned by the small crack corps of the excubitors, perhaps only 300 strong, the only military unit stationed in the capital apart from the mainly decorative *scholae*. The two corps as we know them from later sources may only be eighth-century foundations, but there must have been a corps of some sort to help out the excubitors and *scholae*³—and bear the whole brunt of defence in their absence.

Here then is our 'army of the city', for the tenth century at least: the *numeri* and *teichistai*. They can be described as 'under the *tagmata*' because they were junior to the four *tagmata*. But where do the factions fit in?

At whatever date the formal division of the defence forces of Constantinople described by Constantine VII came into being,⁴ it is easy to see why it did. For the efficient mobilization of so large a city it was obviously desirable that there should be an agreed division of responsibility between the military and civilian elements of the militia, and the city prefect was the obvious person to supervise the registration and (if necessary) mobilization of the civilians. We may compare a law of 391 (*CJ* i.28.4 = *C.Th.* 1.10.4): 'omnia corporatorum genera, quae in Constantinopolitana civitate versantur, universos quoque cives atque populares praefecturae urbanae regi moderamine recognoscas.' In other late texts *populares* is found denoting circus partisans, but here a more general meaning, synonymous with *cives*, is at least as likely. On the face of it, the factions might

¹ Justinian, *Nov.* 16 and 26 (the latter abolishing the title—evidently not permanently).

² Or perhaps only restored and completed them: cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii.89, and C. Capizzi, *L'Imperatore Anastasio I* (1969), 202–4. For the concern of the *teichistae* with the Long, not the Theodosian Walls, see Bury, *Imperial Administrative System*, p. 67. For the extensive but largely unexplored remains of the Long Walls, R. M. Harrison, *Arch. Ael.* (Publications of the Society of Antiquities of Newcastle upon Tyne) 4th. ser. xlvii (1969), 33f.

³ The *portarii*, *tribuni*, and *vicarii* on the staffs of both *numeri* and *teichistae* are a 'guarantee of antiquity', Bury, *Imperial Administrative System*, p. 67.

⁴ Perhaps by 705 anyway: see below, p. 119.

indeed seem naturally to belong with the civilians. Yet they did not constitute a guild, and in the *Book of Ceremonies* they are as sharply distinguished from ordinary citizens as from soldiers proper. Their only contact with the prefect was in his capacity as superintendent of law and order in the city. In this capacity it was his not infrequent duty in the sixth century to imprison or execute delinquent partisans¹—hardly the basis for a close relationship. But if there are difficulties in assigning the factions to the province of the city prefect, there is an obvious pointer to an association with the *tagmata*: tenth-century ceremonial.

By then, as we can see from countless passages in the *Book of Ceremonies*, one division each of the Blues and Greens was led for ceremonial purposes by, respectively, the domestic of the *scholae* and the domestic of the excubitors. Much importance has been attached to this link: it has been seen as a survival of the days when the two domestics led the factions, not into the palace to greet the emperor, but into battle against the foe. At first sight this is an attractive view. Yet the *Book of Ceremonies* needs careful handling, not so much because it is late evidence for the sixth century (it does contain sixth-century survivals), but because of its peculiar character. For such works (in Bury's words) 'though of official origin, are not directly concerned with administration; they are concerned with ceremonial and court precedence, and while they reveal a picture of the world of officialdom, they tell us little of the serious duties of the officials'.² Accordingly it does not necessarily follow that this link between the factions and the *tagmata* reflects a genuine military association. Indeed, there are serious objections to the hypothesis of a simple survival.

First the Greens and the excubitors. The excubitors were the emperor's most trusted and efficient guards.³ When (as often happened in the sixth century) the factions got out of hand, it was always the excubitors who were sent in to restore order. They are explicitly recorded as attacking the factions five times between 498 and 601, and it is probably they who were used on most other occasions too. In 498 and 565 we hear of particu-

¹ It was no doubt for their failure to deal with the serious faction riots that there was such a rapid turnover of city prefects in 563-5, until the rot was stopped by the ruthless Julian: cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii. 779.

² *Imperial Administrative System*, p. 8.

³ R. I. Frank, *Scholae Palatinae* (1969), 204f., with my remarks in *CR* xxii (1972), 137-8.

larly ferocious and protracted battles between the excubitors and the Greens. Is it credible that the Greens were actually a part of the excubitors, armed and trained by their officers?

Now the Blues and the *scholae*. Here the objections are rather different. It is clear from the contemptuous accounts of Procopius and Agathias¹ that by the late fifth century the *scholae* had degenerated into a purely parade-ground regiment, 'city dandies with fine clothes, fit only for processions' in Agathias' phrase.² When Justinian was short of money he used to threaten to send them to the front, with the result that they would remit their pay for the duration of hostilities to avoid being posted.³ They were quite unfit to take the field against the Cotrigurs in 559. By the tenth century they had become a crack corps again,⁴ but throughout the heyday of the factions, between the late fifth and early seventh centuries, the *scholae* were as unsuitable and improbable a military partner for the Blues as, for an entirely different reason, the excubitors were for the Greens.

So the military link between them would have to be later than this. Yet the evidence for their military activity, such as it is, ends with the early seventh century. After the reign of Phocas there is only one reference—and that doubtful—to the factions as forming even part of the citizen militia of Constantinople. When Justinian II sent a massive expedition to contain a rebellion at Cherson in 711, he filled every ship he could lay his hands on, according to Theophanes, with 'senators, guildsmen, 'demesmen' (*δημόται*), and people of every description'.⁵ Yet Nicephorus, a contemporary of Theophanes and almost certainly drawing on the same source as him, does not mention the factions separately: his boats are filled with 'soldiers, peasants, craftsmen, senators and the people of the city (*ὁ τῆς πόλεως δῆμος*)'.⁶ Indeed, it may well be that Theophanes' *δημόται* was not intended to single out the factions from the 'people of the city' as a whole, the standard meaning of the word in non-specialized contexts.

So both the character and the date of this link between the

¹ Procopius, *Anecd.* xxiv.17f., Agathias, v.15.1-5.

² v.15.2. ³ Procopius, *Anecd.* xxiv.21.

⁴ H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, *BCH* lxxxiv (1960), 55f.

⁵ p. 377.28f. de Boor. ⁶ p. 44 de Boor.

factions and the two senior *tagmata* are far from straightforward. It is significant too that even in tenth-century ceremonial the domestics lead the factions, not in their own right as military commanders, but in their capacity as 'democrats' of the factions.¹ Furthermore, when the domestics cannot be present, they are replaced in this capacity, not by their own subordinates in the *scholae* and excubitors, but by the commanders of the *numeri* and Walls respectively—a detail that casts further doubt on the precise status of the link. Then there is the curious 'ballet' ceremonial of *Book of Ceremonies* i.65 (74), where the factions are represented at an imperial banquet, not only by their own personnel and the two senior domestics, but also by three representatives of the *numeri* and *teichistai* respectively, their domestics, vicars, and tribunes. The chapter in question seems to date from the tenth century,² but the ceremonial itself may go back very much further. It is suggestive, for example, that it is not the senior officers of the *numeri* and *teichistai* but those with the oldest titles who take part, the vicars and tribunes, titles older than those of the domestics themselves.

This greater representation of the *numeri* and *teichistai* suggests the possibility that, if there is a genuine military link between the factions and any military units in the city, it is to the more humble *numeri* and *teichistai* rather than the glamorous *scholae* and excubitors that they were (in whatever sense) attached.³ But the domestics of the *numeri* and *teichistai* were the lowest-ranking military commanders of the city, perhaps the reason why they came to be replaced for most ceremonial purposes by the two senior and most prestigious commanders.

It would be pointless to speculate why the factions should have been attached to the military rather than civilian side of the city militia (if indeed they were), but one factor of possible relevance is their long record of indiscipline and treachery, better supervised perhaps by soldiers than the city prefect. There is the example of 602: having sent the factions to man the Theodosian Walls against Phocas, Maurice had second thoughts

¹ e.g. *De Caer.* 13.10f. and *passim*.

² Bury, *EHR* xxii (1907), 433: on the ceremonial, Vogt's commentary, ii (1940), 107f.

³ This is, of course, a much more likely link, not least because the *scholae* and excubitors might happen to be absent from the city when the militia needed to be mobilized. See now addendum p. 346.

next day and appointed a trusted general to command them¹—not that even this was enough to forestall their disloyalty.

A neglected passage of Theophanes suggests that the twofold division of the militia may go back at least to Justinian II. On his restoration in 705 Justinian is said to have killed in revenge 'a countless multitude from both the civilian and military registers (*ἀναρίθμητον δὲ πλῆθος ἔκ τε τοῦ πολιτικοῦ καὶ τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ καταλόγου*)'.² It is difficult to be sure how far one can press such a phrase. It might mean no more than soldiers and civilians in general. But when we remember that Justinian II did have to recapture his capital by siege—unsuccessfully, till he contrived a daring night entry through a water pipe—the use of the technical term *κατάλογος* could well be a reference to the twofold militia mobilized to defend the walls against him. Circus partisans will no doubt have featured among the civilians, but Nicephorus' account of the mobilization of 711 quoted above,³ while making the same distinction between the *στρατιωτικοὶ κατάλογοι* and civilians (broken up into artisans, peasants, senators, and the 'people of the city'), suggests that the guildsmen were by now a more prominent and useful element in the militia than the factions.

It is interesting to note that the militia described by Constantine VII was assigned the same two functions as the guilds and citizens of Rome under Valentinian III: guarding the city and repairing the walls. It is hard to believe that there was ever a time when the guilds of Constantinople did not share such responsibilities at least equally with the factions.⁴ Undoubtedly they did perform other and (since more regular) in practice more important public services. For example, in the sixth century they provided the only fire brigade we know of,⁵ a vital service in a large and populous city whose poorer quarters, then as now, were built of wood. They also performed, as in many other cities, a number of police duties.⁶ It is impossible to

¹ Simocatta, viii.8.7.

² p. 375.16 de Boor.

³ See p. 117.

⁴ Indeed, they were probably obligations on the guilds and other local associations of Republican Rome: cf. A. W. Lintott, *Violence in Republican Rome* (1968), 82.

⁵ Jones, *Later Roman Empire* ii (1964), 694–5; Chastagnol, *La Préfecture urbaine* (1960), 254f.

⁶ Jones and Chastagnol, *loc. cit.*, and cf. MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian* (1963), 134.

imagine the factions of the late fifth to early seventh centuries being entrusted with such responsible tasks. There was probably no other single body that gave the police such trouble as the factions, and almost all the serious fires we hear of in the sixth century were started by the factions. Is it conceivable that the city's biggest internal enemy should have been singled out as its *sole* protector when danger threatened from without?¹

Much weight has been placed on a curious phrase used in connection with the hasty mobilization to face the Cotrigurs in 559. According to Theophanes, Justinian ἐδημότευσε πολλούς and sent them to man the Long Walls.² δημοτεύειν is evidently a technical term, and it has generally been assumed that it means something like 'mobilize the circus factions'. Clearly this assumption is heavily influenced by the 'deme-fallacy', but this is not the only reason why it is wrong. In the context how can the word refer exclusively to the factions? Surely Justinian cannot have cared whether or not the men he sent to the Walls were circus partisans so long as they were brave and numerous. It is hardly likely that (as Rambaud's interpretation, 'factionibus adscribere', would imply) Justinian first enrolled volunteers in the factions and only then sent them to the Walls. In 602 the partisans numbered only 2,400, not only a wholly inadequate force to garrison the 41 miles of the Long Walls, but obviously only a fraction of the able-bodied male population of a city of some half to three-quarters of a million.

δημοτεύειν perhaps means no more than 'mobilize'.³ There is no reference to the factions as such—though it is possible that they were *among* those mobilized. This interpretation receives support from a text which seems to have been overlooked in this connection. There is in Simocatta an exactly parallel description of the procedure described by Theophanes, except for the fact that the purist Simocatta has substituted a vague 'classical'

¹ Bréhier concedes that perhaps 'il y avait quelque paradoxe à confier des services municipaux et la défense de la ville à deux associations rivales dont les querelles incessantes mettaient en question l'existence même du pouvoir' (*Les Institutions de l'empire byzantin* (1949), 199), but feels no doubt that this was indeed the case.

² p. 233.12 de Boor.

³ Thus I would accept in essentials Stein's formulation, 'mobiliser les (ou des) membres de la milice citadine' (*Bas-Empire* ii.537, n.3). Lampe's 'compel to serve as soldiers' (*Patristic Greek Lexicon* s.v., without reference to the alleged link with the 'demes') is rather too general.

word for the late or vulgar *δημοτεύειν*: when danger threatened in 601, Maurice took his excubitors (who were mounted) *καὶ τὸ ὀπλιτικὸν συλλεξάμενος τὰ Μακρὰ διεφρούρησε Τείχη*.¹ What Maurice did was to levy or mobilize some foot soldiers ('hoplites' is another of Simocatta's archaisms). 'Mobilize' would imply that the force existed already and only needed to be called out;² 'levy' that it needed to be raised specially. Which one chooses depends on whether or not the careful provisions described by Constantine VII yet existed, which we do not know. Practice may even have changed between Justinian and Maurice.

Simocatta goes on to say that a 'substantial number of circus partisans (*δήμων*) from Byzantium were there also'. That is to say, this levy did contain *some* partisans—though the implication is clearly that they made up only one section of it. Theophanes, indeed, while posting the excubitors and the 'hoplites' at the Long Walls, has the 'demes' guarding only the city proper,³ as under Phocas. He is clearly following Simocatta (hence his 'hoplites') and this might just be a slip. But he did have another source for Maurice, John of Antioch, whom he does use to supplement Simocatta,⁴ and it *may* be that this is a detail he added from John. If so, then the factions would have formed *no* part of Maurice's special levy: they were just used as a reserve guard to protect the city should the first line of defence fail.

The only other passage where *δημοτεύειν* occurs, though used intransitively, bears out this interpretation. When faced with Phocas' rebellion in 602 Maurice summoned the demarchs of the two factions and asked (in Simocatta's words) for the exact count (2,400) of their *δημοτεύοντες* (*τῶν δημοτευόντων ἐπὶ λεπτοῦ τὸν ἀριθμόν*).⁵ Now in classical times we find only the passive form *δημοτεύεσθαι*, 'to be a member of a deme'. Being a member of a deme at Athens entailed being liable (if of an appropriate age) for military service. Could it be that this Byzantine usage developed from some such original connotation of the word? At all events, such a meaning does fit the Simocatta passage: Maurice was asking for the number of partisans 'liable for mobilization'. In Theophanes the word is used transitively:

¹ vii.15.7.

² The meaning required by vii.13.8, where the Khagan of the Avars marched to Nicopolis after *τὸ ὀπλιτικὸν συλλεξάμενος*.

³ p. 279.19–20 de Boor.

⁴ See p. 32.

⁵ viii.7.10.

'mobilize those who were liable'.¹ As remarked already, there must have been many more than 2,400 partisans who were thus liable.

The reason why Maurice singled out the factions to man the city walls for him emerges clearly from Simocatta's narrative. Even before the mutiny of the army the people were disaffected, and it was only after he had discreetly tested the loyalty of the factions in the hippodrome that he had felt able to enlist their support. No sooner had he done this than popular outcry against him redoubled and the factions too deserted him. Obviously this was no ordinary case of the mobilization of the city militia as a whole. Phocas' use of the factions eight years later was similarly atypical: he too was a hated tyrant in the eyes of most of his subjects, few of whom he could have trusted. There is also the point that, despite their constant riots, the emperor had a special relationship with the factions (p. 295). It is understandable that, when all other avenues were shut, he should in the last resort have looked to the factions.

It may be accepted then that the factions did form *a* part of what may be called the citizen militia of Constantinople—at least by *c.* 600. But what of the assumption that they underwent a military training and were permanently under arms? It is implausible, unsupported and even contradicted by our evidence.

First the implausibility of the notion. There can be little doubt that the single most serious threat to law and order in not only Constantinople but many other eastern cities from the reign of Anastasius on was the rivalry and violence of the factions. Time and again the excubitors were called out, and loss of life on both sides was normal. And quite apart from the occasional street battles that sometimes lasted for several days, there was a constant background of minor hooliganism. It is evident that the civilian authorities were unable to cope with a serious faction riot, and (as the astonishing Green victories over all comers at Antioch in 507 well illustrate)² even trained soldiers might experience considerable difficulty in containing the situation.

¹ Difficulties remain, of course; there were other and more obvious Greek words for 'mobilize', and *δημοτεύειν* seems never to occur in later Byzantine usage.

² See p. 150.

Of course the authorities always won in the end—even at a cost of 30,000 dead in the Nika revolt of 532. The factors which ultimately ensured their victory must surely have been (a) the discipline and (b) the equipment of the emperor's guards. Can we really believe that, faced as he was with the constant threat of irresponsible and dangerous riots from the factions, the emperor solemnly equipped them with precisely these two advantages? Can we believe that he attached them to his excubitors and *scholae* so that even their overwhelming advantage, mailed cavalry, was shared with the factions?

Naturally, the militants in the factions—one might almost say the gangster element—will have managed to procure whatever equipment, protective or offensive, they wanted. We hear of a body of 250 young Greens wearing breastplates in the Nika revolt.¹ Many probably became experienced and formidable fighters, more than a match for the average soldier in the guerilla warfare of the back streets.

But all this was quite unofficial—not to say illegal. Procopius remarks that it was only at night that the extremists dared to carry weapons openly.² In daytime they just wore concealed daggers. Marcellinus describes how in 501 the Greens smuggled weapons into the theatre by hiding them in earthenware flasks or in trays laden with fruit which they pretended to sell in the portico.³ It had long been illegal for civilians to carry arms, and Justinian made a special point of reiterating the ban,⁴ as well as taking steps to secure a government monopoly in the manufacture and distribution of arms⁵—no doubt in some measure precisely with a view to *preventing* the factions arming themselves. According to Theophanes, after a riot in 563 those partisans found to be in possession of swords had their thumbs cut off.⁶

¹ *Chron. Pasch.* 625.12f., Theophanes, p. 185.6f. (only 200). Guillard's statement that '250 jeunes Verts, armés et portant cuirasse, formaient la garde d'Hypace' (*BS* xxix (1968), 27) is hardly supported by these texts, both of which he misquotes beyond recognition.

² *Anecd.* vii.15.

³ Marcellinus *comes*, *Chron.* s.a. (*Chron. Min.* ed. Mommsen, ii.95).

⁴ Justinian, *Nov.* lxxxv (539) and earlier sources quoted by Jones, iii. 343, n.54.

⁵ Jones, *Later Roman Empire* ii 671. In addition 'Arms illicitly produced or sold were to be confiscated, and all arms were to be stored either in the imperial arsenal or in the public armouries established in certain cities, apparently for issue to the citizens in case of hostile attack.'

⁶ A.M. 6055.

Not counting the case of 515 where we have only the hints of the Porphyrius epigrams, there are just four certain examples of the factions acting as a militia. It is surely striking that in two out of these four examples they are expressly said to have been *unarmed*. At Antioch in 540—the only occasion when they actually fought—Procopius' excellent and well-informed account says that a few of the partisans were armed, οἱ δὲ πλείστοι γυμνοὶ καὶ λίθων βολαῖς χρώμενοι.¹ Well and boldly though they fought, they were evidently not a regular armed militia. It may be added that, apart from an unsuccessful Hun assault in 398,² by 540 Antioch had not experienced a siege in 300 years. It seems unlikely that they kept a trained militia for such rare emergencies. Indeed, it is clear from Procopius that Chosroes' attack found the people of Antioch quite unfit to defend themselves.³

Theophanes explicitly describes Maurice as arming (καθοπλίσας) the factions in 601,⁴ and Belisarius as arming 'the people' (λαός) in 559,⁵ though he does not there single out the factions. In earlier periods of Roman history we hear of the people being armed in a crisis, and the implication is always, as here, that under normal circumstances they did not possess arms.⁶ Blackjacks and daggers were fine in the hippodrome, but when it came to real fighting it seems clear that the majority of circus partisans did not either regularly carry or even have access to proper arms. When called upon to man the walls they would have been issued with arms like all the other civilians.⁷

One scholar was impressed by the fact that it is always the 'demes', never the 'factions' who are described as manning the walls.⁸ This he regarded as the only traceable survival of the original distinction between the two bodies. The militia, then, was nothing to do with the 'mere' sporting associations of the

¹ ii.8.28.

² E. Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'Empire romain* (1951), 190.

³ On the weakness of the defences and garrison at Antioch see now R. Ciocan-Yvanescu, *Byzantion* xxxix (1969), 6of.

⁴ p. 287.21f. de Boor.

⁵ p. 233.23. de Boor.

⁶ P. A. Brunt, 'The Roman Mob', *Past and Present* xxxv (1966), 10–11; for a later period note particularly Herodian vii.11.7.

⁷ For arms depositories, see p. 123, n.5 above. The πρὸς τειχομαχίαν σκεύη stored in the building known as Mangana (*Patria Cypoleos* p. 216.18 Preger) were presumably for siege warfare.

⁸ J. V. A. Fine Jr., *Sbornik Rad. Viz. Inst.* x (1967), 29.

hippodrome. Even those not explicitly committed to the 'deme-fallacy' remark as a matter of course that the Greens and Blues in their military capacity were no 'mere sports fans'.¹ The contemptuous qualification is misleading. Even if they were not all that modern scholars would have them, the circus partisans of Constantinople were much more than sports fans. But whatever else they were, it was certainly they who manned the walls.

Procopius' account of the brave defence put up by the partisans of Antioch in 540 identifies them, not by this term or that but by the precise description 'those who used to fight each other in the hippodromes'. The epigrams from the Porphyrius monument of 515 similarly use none of the standard terms. But they make it clear none the less that those who fought for Anastasius against the 'tyrant' were none other than Porphyrius' fans in the hippodrome. When Maurice tested the loyalty of the factions in the hippodrome, evidently he had counted on those who would do the fighting having come to watch the racing. At Heraclius' approach in 610 it was a charioteer, Calliopas Trimolaimes, who turned the Greens against Phocas.² It was a charioteer again, Porphyrius Calliopas, who led the Greens on the rampage at Antioch in 507, and fought again with them, more legitimately, against Vitalian in 515.

The distinction between sporting factions and urban militia is a modern hypothesis largely inspired by a linguistic misconception. The evidence clearly indicates that the focus of the factions in their capacity as a militia, just as in all their other activities, was the hippodrome.

¹ e.g. Y. Janssens, *Byzantion* xi (1936), 510.

² John of Antioch, *frag.* 110, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 150.13f. de Boor.

VI. The Religious Sympathies of the Factions

The part played by the Blues and Greens . . . in Byzantine history from its earliest years till the reign of Heraclius is not yet fully known and many problems still await a solution; yet one thing is certain, the religious evolution of Byzantium and of the whole East is inseparably bound up with the rivalry between the foremost Circus parties.¹

THE Blues are conventionally supposed to have been orthodox, the Greens monophysite. More important, the converse has also been assumed: not only were all Greens monophysites; all monophysites were Greens. These equations have resulted in an enormous oversimplification and distortion of the religious history of the fifth and sixth centuries. For example, solely on the basis of a sixth-century inscription from Gortyn mentioning the Greens,² it has recently been assumed 'that monophysitism had found adherents among the populace of Crete'.³ With the full complexities of the doctrinal rivalries of the period we are not (fortunately) primarily concerned. What does concern us is the conventional assumption that riots between Blues and Greens sprang from nothing so simple as the victory or defeat of this or that colour in the hippodrome; that factional rivalry is a direct reflection of religious rivalry.⁴

So firmly entrenched has this view become in all the standard histories and handbooks, seldom qualified with any word of caution or hint of doubt, that it comes as a surprise to discover that there is not one scrap of ancient evidence in its favour. If it

¹ F. Dvornik, *The Photian Schism* (1948), 6-7.

² M. Guarducci, *Inscr. Cret.* iv (1950), 513 (cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 75).

³ S. Spyridakis, 'Circus Factions in Sixth-Century Crete', *GRBS* viii (1967), 249-50.

⁴ An assumption that underlies the whole of Jarry's *Hérésies et factions dans l'empire byzantin* (1968) no less than the work of Manojlović's school. Yet despite the fact that he rejected the Manojlović/Grégoire interpretation (rightly, if for the wrong reason), Jarry never thought to query the assumption itself. See too p. 153.

could be shown to be even a plausible inference, that might be something. But it cannot. On the contrary, on the basis of such evidence as there is, I would suggest:

- (a) that in general the Greens were every bit as orthodox as the Blues;
- (b) that in general religious motives played no part in factional rivalry;
- (c) that the factions did not, *as factions*, take any part in religious disputes.

I

Conventional studies have laid most weight on an alleged coincidence between the religious and factional sympathies of the Emperors. Indeed, many have rested their case on this alone. It would be hard to imagine a weaker foundation.

Of the fifteen-odd emperors between Theodosius II and Heraclius only four are known to have been Greens (Theodosius, Zeno, Maurice, Heraclius); and three Blues (Marcian, Justinian, Phocas)—of whom one is a special case. All three Blue emperors were Chalcedonian, it is true, but of the four Green emperors not one can really be called monophysite. What of those unaccounted for? It should be obvious that so small is the sample that just one counter-example would suffice to bring down the whole edifice. There are in fact no fewer than five—or six, if we may count Phocas twice. In short, the exceptions are in a majority.

The most flagrant is Justinian's wife Theodora. Her devotion to the monophysite cause was notorious, a serious embarrassment to her orthodox husband.¹ Not less notorious was her support of the Blues.²

Justinian's successor Justin II proclaimed a policy of strict neutrality between the factions,³ evidently hoping thereby to avoid the factional violence of the previous reign, exacerbated by Justinian's undisguised partiality for the Blues. And he was apparently successful. At any rate there is no hint of trouble from either faction throughout his reign. Yet at the same time Justin was to become a stern persecutor of monophysitism. If

¹ e.g. Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 377f.

² Procopius, *Anecd.* x.16-18, cf. ix.2-7.

³ Theophanes, p. 243.4-9.

Greens were monophysites and monophysites Greens, how can these two policies be reconciled?

Despite Dölger's strained attempt to make him a Blue,¹ the ancient evidence makes it fairly clear that Maurice was a Green.² And it was largely for this reason that Grégoire and Vasiliev argued that he was, if not an outright monophysite, at any rate sympathetic to the monophysite cause. Seldom can so insubstantial a theory have led to the disregard of so many hard facts. The proofs of Maurice's Chalcedonianism are manifold and incontrovertible.³ He was damned on all sides as a persecutor by monophysite writers, upheld as a peerless champion of orthodoxy by the Pope.⁴

As for Phocas, though it is true that he was orthodox and that he was supported by the Blues in the latter part of his reign, it is also true that he was proclaimed Emperor in the first place by the Greens.⁵ How would exponents of the traditional view explain the paradox of the Greens supporting two Chalcedonian Emperors in succession? They could of course point out that the Greens did eventually desert both Emperors. They might even suggest that it was precisely because of their Chalcedonianism that both were thus deserted. Yet if so, it would be truly astonishing if the Greens had made the same blunder three

¹ *BZ* xxxvi (1937), 542-3.

² Theophanes, p. 287.13, and the passage of John of Ephesus and chronicle fragment discussed below, pp. 143-5; cf. (on the controversy over this point between Grégoire and Dölger) Vasiliev, 'The Life of St. Theodore of Edessa', *Byzantion* xvi (1942/3), 184-5 and Maricq, *BARB* xxxv (1949), 64, n.1.

³ Most are assembled in R. Paret's excellent study, 'Dometianus de Méliène et la politique religieuse de l'empereur Maurice', *REB* xv (1957), 42-72. The late Syriac account of the death of Maurice, counting him a saint, to which Vasiliev drew attention (*loc. cit.*), is as nothing set against the hard near-contemporary evidence, and in any case is probably not Jacobite at all (as Vasiliev had supposed) but Nestorian (as Nau had suspected), in which case the argument falls to the ground (Paret, *op. cit.* 72, n.2). It is particularly strange that Grégoire should have appealed to the supposed Armenian origin (probably legendary) of Maurice in support (*Le Muséeon* lix (1946), 295f. and elsewhere), since it was in his relations with the monophysite Armenians in particular that his intransigent Chalcedonianism became most evident: cf. P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam* i (1951), 211f., Paret, *op. cit.* 66f. The same applies to his relations with Georgia and the Lakhmid Arabs, to judge by their conversion to Chalcedonianism precisely during Maurice's reign: Goubert, *op. cit.* 231f., 264f. On Grégoire's fallacious argument from the Saint Euphemia legend, see below, p. 145. See too P. Goubert, in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon* ii (1953), 179f., Frend, *Mon. Movement*, 332f.

⁴ Gregory, *Registrum* ix.135 (*PL* lxxvii.981a).

⁵ Though see below, p. 265.

times in a row by championing (as they did) the no less orthodox Heraclius in his rebellion against Phocas in 610.¹ No one can seriously believe that orthodoxy was the issue in the bitter strife between Blues and Greens that accompanied the fall of Phocas and the accession of Heraclius.

But the weakest link in the chain is the one on which most has been made to depend: Anastasius, the only Emperor to make a serious attempt to establish monophysitism as the creed of the capital. Conventional studies talk freely of a 'Green supremacy' fostered by Anastasius followed by a 'Blue reaction' fostered by Justinian. There are one or two facts here, but the vital links which supply the motivations are missing. Justinian did favour the Blues, but no source says that he did so because they supported his religious policies. It is possible (though not certain) that the Greens were dominant under Anastasius, yet he was definitely *not* himself a Green, nor did he tolerate their violence.

Several illustrations of this equation have been alleged, all of them built on sand. Vitalian, for example, according to Dvornik,² drew support for his rebellion against the 'Green' Anastasius from the 'orthodox' Blues. True, Vitalian was Chalcedonian, yet there is no more evidence that he was supported by the Blues than that Anastasius was supported by the Greens. Nor is there the slightest evidence that Leo (457-74) 'looked for his support among the orthodox Blues', or that Zeno dethroned the monophysite usurper Basiliscus (475-6) 'with the Blues' assistance in return for his reluctant championship of orthodoxy.³ We do not know which colour Leo supported, and it would be strange if Zeno had been backed in such an enterprise by the Blues when (in Malalas' words) he was the darling of the Greens.⁴ The claim that the Nika revolt of 532 was an attempt by the Greens to direct Justinian to 'a more reasonable religious policy'⁵ is utterly perverse: the revolt was

¹ There is nothing to suggest that Heraclius was anything but Chalcedonian at the time of his accession. The fact that he eventually lent his name to the ill-fated conciliatory formula of monotheletism, promulgated in 638, is entirely irrelevant to the support he won from the Greens in 610. It is thus quite misleading when (e.g.) Dvornik writes of the publication of the *Ecthesis* revealing 'certain imperial sympathies for the Greens' (*BM* i (1946), 128). For the rebellion of 610, below, pp. 265, 282-5.

² *BM* i (1946), 127.

³ Dvornik, *op. cit.* 126.

⁴ p. 379.

⁵ Dvornik, *op. cit.* 127. Cf. Frend, *Mon. Movement*, 263.

caused by both factions united and the usurper who eventually emerged was as orthodox as Justinian.¹

These are just typical examples of vital gaps in our documentation being filled in by conjecture. Of course, in such an ill-documented period the historian must resort to conjecture at some points if he is to make anything of the pitifully fragmentary evidence. Yet there must be some basis for his conjectures in that evidence or he will simply be imposing his own pattern on it. I would suggest that there is no intelligible pattern in the factional and religious allegiances of the Emperors.

II

But the real weakness in the conventional view is the absence of evidence where it might have been most expected: in the ecclesiastical historians, the popular chronicles, the lives of saints, the abundant sectarian literature of the period, and in accounts of actual sectarian disputes.

Let us take another look at the reign of Anastasius. It is certain that Anastasius' policies, particularly his ecclesiastical policy, gave rise to much ill will and even violence. Clearly there was also much factional violence, especially from the Greens. Now if this factional rivalry sprang directly from the religious rivalry, why is it that no ancient source took what modern scholars have found such an easy and obvious step, and linked the two? Indeed, if the evidence for religious and factional disturbances is analysed more closely, it emerges that almost all the factional riots took place in the first half of the reign, almost all the religious protests in the second, when Anastasius was beginning to lean increasingly towards monophysitism. I have in fact argued elsewhere that factional rivalry had to a great extent subsided before the religious troubles began.²

Nor do we find in our sources any hint of the link (which moderns again have found so obvious) between the eclipse of the Greens by the Blues after Anastasius' death and the eclipse of monophysitism by Chalcedonianism under his successors.

¹ For further decisive objections to this thesis, see Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 449, n.2 ('Théodora était monophysite et Hypatius catholique, alors que la thèse en question demanderait l'inverse, mais encore et surtout parce que la sédition Nika eut lieu à un moment où la persécution violente des monophysites avait cessé depuis quelques mois').

² See *Porphyrius*, p. 239.

And once we have seen that Anastasius neither supported nor was supported by the Greens, all basis for linking this alleged supremacy of the Greens with Anastasius' own leanings to monophysitism disappears. And if there is no connection between the behaviour of the Greens and monophysitism under Anastasius, why should there be any connection between the rise of the Blues under Justinian and Chalcedonianism?

Indeed, a closer look at the evidence might suggest that there is little enough support for this notion of a period of 'Green supremacy' under Anastasius at all (at least as it is formulated in modern accounts). Certainly there were several occasions when the Greens took the initiative in factional violence. In 498 several Greens were arrested for throwing stones, and a serious riot ensued.¹ In 501² they ambushed the Blues in the hippodrome, and their disgraceful behaviour at Antioch in 507 under Porphyrius' leadership will be discussed further below.³ They caused trouble there at the beginning of Anastasius' reign as well.⁴

However, on the two latter occasions, Anastasius promptly sent troops against them under commanders who had been granted special emergency powers. In 498 as well he had responded to a request for the release of some Green malefactors by sending the excubitors against them—with disastrous results. Half the hippodrome was burned down, and Anastasius himself narrowly escaped injury. In the face of facts such as these it is difficult to account for the modern myth that Anastasius allowed or encouraged Green violence—or to see why it is that the Greens are supposed to have supported Anastasius.

Much has been made of the fact that Anastasius appointed as city prefect after the violence of 498 a 'patron of the Greens' called Plato, who happens also to have been a monophysite.⁵ But rather than see this as a typical example of Anastasius packing his administration with Greens, it would be more natural to see it as a desperate attempt to pacify the Greens after his unnecessarily harsh suppression of their protest (after

¹ Malalas, p. 394.11f., *Exc. de Insid.* p. 168.11f.; *Chron. Pasch.* p. 608.1f.

² Marcellinus, s.a. 501 (*Chr. Min.* ii.95); Jo. Ant. fr. 101 (*Exc. de Insid.* p. 142.2f.; Malalas, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 168.26f.; Theophanes, p. 147.17f.; Only the full account of Marcellinus mentions the Green initiative.

³ See p. 151.

⁴ Malalas, pp. 392-3.

⁵ Malalas, p. 393.4.

all, the implication is that the former city prefect had *not* been a Green).

And the fact that Plato was a monophysite as well as a Green is probably best put down to simple coincidence, with no wider implications. For when Plato backed Anastasius' attempt in 512 to have the monophysite addition to the Trishagion chanted in Saint Sophia and other churches in Constantinople, the most militant opposition came from *both* factions, as we learn from the chronicle of Victor Tunnunensis, based here on excellent contemporary material.¹ Blues and Greens united clamoured for Plato to be thrown to the beasts!² This passage of Victor is especially important, since it is the only place in the whole of extant literature where either faction is mentioned in connection with the monophysite controversy.

Modern accounts quite unwarrantably assume that only the Blues opposed Anastasius on this occasion (e.g., 'The orthodox, the Blues, rose in horror . . .').³ The only evidence we possess states categorically that both Greens and Blues opposed Anastasius. And after the crisis was over, he punished both with equal harshness.⁴

Vasiliev fancied that the Porphyrius epigrams propped up this house of cards. 'The epigrams', he writes,⁵ 'give us a very interesting picture of how gradually Porphyrius, whose racing triumphs fascinated Anastasius, under pressing imperial influence, left the Blues in order to enter officially the imperial party of the Greens.' When Justin and Justinian 'drastically changed Anastasius' religious policy . . . the faction of the Blues . . . became the more influential'.⁶ 'This change', Vasiliev concludes, 'in the religious orientation of the Byzantine government may be clearly traced in the epigrams dedicated to Porphyrius, who became *persona grata* among the Blues, of course with the consent and probably with the recommendation of the Emperor.'

¹ s.a. 513 (*Chron. Min.* ii.195); 'prasinorum . . . simulque et venetorum turbae adversum Anastasium imp. unitae'. Victor's entries for the reign of Anastasius derive from the *Hist. Eccl.* of Theodore Lector, completed c. 518: see G. C. Hansen's edition (GCS, Berlin 1971), xxi, 145.

² Marcellinus, s.a. 512.6 (*Chron. Min.* ii.98): see Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 177-8, for sources on this riot.

³ J. Lindsay, *Byzantium into Europe* (1952), 118f.

⁴ Malalas, fr. 42, *Exc. de Ins.* p. 170.12f.

⁵ *DOP* iv (1948), 42. ⁶ *Op. cit.* 45.

Now we have seen that on our other evidence this interpretation of factional rivalry is false. But we have also seen that the charioteer-epigrams are by far our best contemporary source for the factions under Anastasius. So if they did lend any support to the traditional picture, that would be important.

In fact, a new and more firmly based chronology for Porphyrius reveals that he changed colours more frequently than the traditional view could allow.¹ Whether or not Anastasius was really 'fascinated' with Porphyrius' triumphs, it is certainly true that his permission must have been obtained for the erection of Porphyrius' statues.² Yet it was the Blues who were allowed to put up the first statue, c. 500, and though it was followed within a year or so by one from the Greens, two more from the Blues followed in rapid succession. The balance was only partially redressed by a second from the Greens several years later in 515. Had Anastasius wished to show favour to the Greens, he could easily have withheld his permission from the Blues, and either left the score at one statue each or levelled it more quickly. The mere fact that he allowed this succession of quite unprecedented honours from the Blues must be held to constitute a definite policy. Here, then, we have irrefutable evidence that at least in the middle years of his reign Anastasius showed marked favour to the *Blues*.

Naturally, this does not square with the traditional view. But it does square with the conclusion drawn above from the other evidence: namely that Anastasius often treated the Greens very harshly. I am not suggesting for a moment that Anastasius is to be regarded as a Blue.³ We have the express statement of Malalas that he deliberately reserved his favour for the Reds in order to have a free hand in punishing both the major colours indifferently, and there seems no good reason to question it.⁴ The fact that he did allow the Greens two statues shows that his attitude towards them was not consistently hostile, and we know that they supported him at a critical moment against the

¹ See *Porphyrius*, Ch. V *passim*.

² *Porphyrius*, p. 227.

³ Jarry's attempt (*Syria XXXVII* (1960), 351-5; *Hérésies et factions* (1968), 283) to prove that Anastasius was a Blue, where not merely frivolous, depends on two other theories, both of them mistaken: (a) that Reds were linked with Blues instead of Greens (see pp. 64-9), and (b) that the Blues represent the upper and the Greens the lower classes (pp. 82f.).

⁴ p. 393-9f.

usurper Vitalian.¹ If his smile rested less often on the Greens than on the Blues, this was simply because at this period the Greens were giving more trouble than the Blues.

Let us take an example from the period of Blue terrorism under Justin I. The man who brought the Blues of Antioch to their knees (in 524/5) was Ephraim of Amida, then Count of the East.² By 527 Ephraim became patriarch of Antioch, and soon established himself as a fanatical persecutor of monophysites.³ The fact that he maltreated Blues while Count does not (of course) prove him a Green. Yet it is hard to believe that so intolerant a Chalcedonian would have employed such drastic measures against his own co-religionists, potential allies in his own battle for orthodoxy.

III

The silence of sectarian writers calls for a word of further comment. It is relevant not only to the monophysite/orthodox interpretation, but also to any other interpretation of factional rivalry in religious terms. To Jarry's, for example, which sees a basic dichotomy between orthodox moderates (Blues) and orthodox extremists (Greens), while distributing lesser groups such as Agnoetes, Barsanuphians, Eutychianists, Gaianists, Julianists, Marcianists, Messalianists—not to mention Jews, Samaritans, Manichees, and even pagans—with a sure hand between the peripheries of the two major colours.⁴

Let us consider the ecclesiastical histories of Evagrius and John of Ephesus, written from the Chalcedonian and monophysite points of view respectively, towards the end of the sixth century. Naturally enough both have much to say about the multifarious battles of orthodoxy (differently interpreted) against heresy. Yet neither mentions the circus factions in this connection, despite the fact that both write of the troubles of Antioch and Alexandria as well as Constantinople, all centres racked by factional violence on and off throughout the sixth century.

¹ See above, p. 107.

² Malalas, pp. 416–20f.; cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 240.

³ Stein, 377, 384.

⁴ *Hérésies et factions* (1968), *passim*. Detailed refutation of each item will not be necessary; it will be enough to point out that there is not one single scrap of ancient evidence for any one of these attributions.

Nor is this just an argument from silence. Both writers do mention the factions, Evagrius three times. On the first occasion (iv.13) Evagrius gives a brief account (from Procopius) of the Nika revolt, which (unlike so many modern scholars) he treats as a purely secular affair. The second passage (iv.32) is a sharp attack on Justinian for his open protection of the Blues (referred to contemptuously as *θατέρω τῶν μερῶν, τῷ κυανέω φημί*) from the consequences of their crimes. Not only does he see the Emperor's relations with the factions to be a purely civil matter: despite both his own orthodoxy and his approval of Justinian's orthodoxy, he disapproves of Justinian's favours to the supposedly orthodox Blues. Third, he describes the opposition of the people of Antioch to their patriarch Gregory in 583 (vi.7). For once both factions united,¹ chanting insults in the streets and the theatre. Evagrius, a protégé of Gregory, is evasive about the nature of his alleged misdemeanours. John of Ephesus, less reticent but no more plausible, accuses him of sacrificing a small boy in the company of a future patriarch of Alexandria.² John also gives a nice account of Gregory's trip to Constantinople for trial, where he glutted the Senate and clergy with lavish bribes before hiring a troupe of pantomime dancers to take home with him. On his return he paid for, and personally superintended, the erection of a new hippodrome.³ Whether or not this 'church of Satan' eventually won the factions over, in 583 at any rate, whatever the precise nature of the religious issues involved in the case against Gregory, we have another example of both Blues and Greens united against a common threat to their faith.

John of Ephesus' one reference⁴ is to a riot between the factions of purely secular origin (p. 146). Now is it really credible that John and Evagrius both failed to perceive that the Greens and

¹ ἀμφω τοιγαροῦν τὰ δῆμα ἐς μίαν συνήντην γνώμην (vi.7, p. 226.6 Bidez/Parmentier): the dual makes it clear that *the two* 'demes' are meant, namely the Blues and Greens.

² HE iii.29, p. 213 Payne Smith.

³ v.17, pp. 225-6 Payne Smith. We know of at least one other bishop who was a circus fan: Ibas of Edessa, to judge from the accusation 'no one will accept a jockey bishop' in an account of the Council of Ephesus in the Syriac MS. BM Add. 14530, f. 18b of 535, transl. in J. G. E. Hoffmann, *Verhandlungen der Kirchenversammlung zu Ephesos* (1873), 30 (cf. too BM Add. 14602, f. 96a, transl. in J. P. Martin, *Le Pseudo-Synode . . . Brigandage d'Éphèse* (1875), 27).

⁴ iii.9, p. 182.

Blues were the militant fronts of their respective parties--if they were indeed such? It is no satisfactory way out to argue that the factions were extremists, disowned by responsible churchmen on both sides. Had this been the case, Justinian's partiality for the Blues would have been the more provocative still, and the silence of monophysite sources even more incredible.

There is a nice parallel in the history of the African Church (and many others in more recent times). There the division was between Catholics and Donatists, and on the Donatist side was an extremist wing known under the name 'circumcellions', a 'combination of gypsy and itinerant Hot Gospeller'¹ who were undoubtedly responsible for much irresponsible violence. Naturally enough Catholics exploited the embarrassing connection: if all Circumcellions were Donatists, might not all Donatists be Circumcellions? At the very least, all Donatists might be blamed for fostering or protecting circumcellions.

Yet in all the period of Green violence under Anastasius and Blue violence under Justinian, no sectarian writer even hints at a link with the religious policy of either emperor. Nor, among the many enormities laid at the doors of the unscrupulous princes of the various churches, does anyone include factional violence.

The true significance of the factional issue in sectarian abuse can be beautifully illustrated from two texts hitherto unexploited in this connection. The first lurks among the complaints brought by the Chalcedonian clergy of Apamea against their monophysite bishop at a local synod in 518.² The bishop, Peter, was alleged (among other delicts) to have consorted for long periods alone with an actress of the Blue faction called Stephane. Whether he was guilty or no is irrelevant. What matters is that Chalcedonians were prepared to use this sort of ammunition to blacken the name of a monophysite. It follows (a) that they cannot have seen the Blues as their natural allies against monophysitism; and (b) that on the contrary the Blues are mentioned here solely as an example of the sort of disreputable rowdies (ἄτακτοι) that a heretic might be expected to associate with.

¹ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 229.

² Read again at the synod held in 536 at Constantinople and preserved among the *acta* of that synod: *ACO* iii.96.17f. A number of witnesses swore to Peter's association with Stephane: *ibid.* 96.17; 100.13; 101.2, 23; 102.35; 103.8; 108.24.

The other is from a tract which Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople, wrote against the iconoclasts between 818 and 820.¹ Among the iconoclasts, he alleged, you will find ex-soldiers, actors, tradesmen, pimps, beggars and 'the leaders of the circus partisans' (οἱ ἐκ τῶν ἐν τοῖς δῆμοις χρωμάτων τῆς ἱππικῆς ἀμίλλης προὔχοντες). Much the same conclusions follow. (a) Nicephorus does not single out just one faction as natural iconoclasts; obviously he has both in mind. And (b) they are again quoted as a typical example of the sort of rowdies (καθάπερ ἦν τῆς ἀκόσμου αὐτῶν συμμορίας ἄξιον) you would expect to find keeping company with heretics.

There is in fact one further text in which the factions are mentioned in connection with the violence arising out of doctrinal controversy: at Alexandria in the late 480s. The protagonists were Peter Mongus, the patriarch, and a monk called Nephalius. Peter sat uncomfortably (and unscrupulously) on the fence, first denouncing then recognizing Chalcedon, but unable to come to terms with the radical monophysite monks of Egypt, whom he drove from Alexandria by force. For a while Nephalius led a spirited opposition, rallying the monks and at one point Zeno himself against Peter.² According to Zacharias Scholasticus, Peter contrived to win much popular support in Alexandria, especially among 'ceux qui formaient les partis dans la ville'.³ Surely the circus parties; the Syriac word used, 'gabbe', is not in itself an unmistakable pointer to circus rather than other parties (though what other parties could be meant?), but fortunately there is a marginal gloss in the only manuscript (untranslated in the standard edition): 'he means the *Veneti* and the *Prasini*'.⁴ So informed and intelligent a comment must be early and is surely correct. Zacharias does not say that one

¹ *Apol.* 9 (PG c.556A); cf. P. J. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople* (1958), 116.

² For a clear picture of this rather confusing situation (eventually the protagonists switched roles, Nephalius veering to Chalcedon and Peter finally establishing his credibility with the monks), see Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 34-6.

³ *Vie de Sévère, Patrol. Orient.* ii.1 (1903), 101.7.

⁴ I am grateful to Sebastian Brock for drawing my attention to and translating this note. On the other hand, the "factions du peuple" who disputed about the title of the Virgin Mary in Constantinople in 430 (Nestorius, *Bazaar of Heracleides*, p. 91 Nau = p. 100 Driver/Hodgson) are (as the context shows) theologians, not (as sometimes claimed) circus factions—not least because Nestorius managed to reconcile them.

party supported Peter and the other Nephalius. The clear implication (as with the Nicephorus passage) is that all those who belonged to the parties supported Peter—and were no doubt those responsible for the ‘riots and massacres’ mentioned earlier in the same sentence. So here again we find the factions united in their support of the same religious faction, a faction moreover that was trying, however ineffectually, to steer a middle path between the extremes of Chalcedonianism and monophysitism. Perhaps the only occasion when the Blues and Greens can be discovered as the storm troopers of a religious leader, it is a leader with no clear-cut doctrinal position at all.

As it happens Evagrius is the only ecclesiastical historian ever to mention the factional allegiance of an emperor. Virtually all our information on this subject comes from the chroniclers. And their interest in it reflects less the genuine political (still less religious) significance of an Emperor’s factional sympathies than the enthusiasm for such matters felt by the audience at which the chronicles were aimed.

Malalas, for example, in a chronicle of modest compass, will give detailed information about the four new dancers presented to the factions in 490 (real names, stage names, native cities).¹ Or take January 563, when two important things happened: rebellion in Africa—and the death of the charioteer Julianicus in a crash². We may compare Chrysostom’s sad story of the charioteer who was killed in the arena the day before his wedding,³ or the theatrical outpouring of grief on the death of Porphyrius’ rival Constantine⁴—and compare the news value of the death of a top racing driver today. Procopius and Agathias would not have bothered with such information any more than Evagrius. Procopius only draws attention to Justinian’s partisanship of the Blues because of its obvious relevance to the Nika revolt;⁵ and Agathias only refers to Justinian squandering money on charioteers and dancers because it was money that should have been spent on maintaining an army fit to defend the city against the Huns in 559.⁶ Neither they nor any other secular historians record the factional sympathy of other

¹ p. 386.14f. ² p. 495.17.

³ *Hom. ix.1 in Jo.* 5.17 (*PG* lxiii.512)—Antioch c. 391.

⁴ *A. Pal.* xv.41–3, *A. Plan.* 365–75, with *Porphyrius*, pp. 136f.

⁵ *Anecd.* vii, *passim.* ⁶ *Hist.* v.14.4, p. 181 Keydell.

Emperors. The chroniclers did so as a matter of course because such things were important to their public.

These chronicles, and especially Malalas, allow the modern reader, as Norman Baynes remarked in a vivid page, to form 'some conception of the things which really interested the good citizens of the Eastern Empire: with a little imagination he will at once supply the missing headlines and his own Sunday paper will appear as a flagrant plagiarism'.¹ The very stuff of social history, of course—but we should not be misled into treating their selection of facts and emphasis as an accurate reflection of the political and religious realities of the day.

Of course the chroniclers were interested in Church affairs too, though naturally enough there tends to be more on the scandalous behaviour of individual bishops than on Church Councils and Christological definitions. Yet despite the fact that they alone of our sources record both religious and factional rivalries, especially of the more sensational variety, not even the chronicles link the two. Take for example Malalas' brief notice on Marcian.² He mentions both the convocation of the Council of Chalcedon, which laid down what was to remain the orthodox definition of true faith, and Marcian's antipathy to the Greens. What he does not do, even by implication (i.e. by juxtaposing the paragraphs) is to suggest that there was any connection between these two policies. It is only modern scholars who have inferred that it was Marcian's orthodoxy that led him to persecute the Greens.³

The only time that a chronicler does mention the factions in connection with monophysitism, he (Victor Tunnunensis) does so, not because this was the issue on which they were perennially divided, but because in 512 at least it seemed to them such a danger to their common orthodoxy that they united in its defence.

For our present purpose, one of the most interesting of the chroniclers is John of Nikiu, a Coptic bishop in Upper Egypt at the end of the seventh century. He has much of interest on the

¹ *The Byzantine Empire* (1925), 35.

² pp. 367–8.

³ Similarly with Marcian's execution of the monophysite Chrysaphius, a Green patron (Malalas, p. 368). It was not monophysitism that was the issue here, but Green turbulence, which Chrysaphius had doubtless been fomenting (p. 22).

role of the factions in the civil war that led to the fall of Phocas,¹ but he never suggests that they took sides in accordance with the religious issue. Indeed, it is more than likely that both factions in seventh-century Egyptian cities would be monophysite—as too perhaps in Gregory's Antioch. Later John describes how the civil and military authorities of Alexandria in 640 enlisted the Blues and Greens respectively in a struggle for power, concluding: 'it has been said that this strife and tumult originated in religious dissensions'.² He means religious dissensions between the protagonists rather than their bully boys the factions, but what is interesting is that he apparently does not take this suggestion very seriously, and gives no details. Evidently he cannot have been familiar with the notion of religious dissension as *the raison d'être* of *all* factional rivalry and violence. Further refutation of the Green/monophysite equation should by now be superfluous, but it is worth drawing attention to § 97.11, where rebellious Greens, together with Blues, are said to have plotted with a Chalcedonian patriarch.

IV

Surprisingly enough it is easier to prove the Greens orthodox than the Blues. Not that there is any reason to believe the Blues anything but orthodox; it is just that evidence happens to be lacking.

For the Greens, let us take first the famous dialogue between the Greens and Justinian's herald or Mandator.³ The Greens protest that they are treated unjustly and the Mandator rebukes them, openly taking the side of the Blues. According to Bury there are hints in the dialogue of the monophysitism of the Greens;⁴ according to Jarry there are hints of their extreme Nestorianism, verging on Manichaeism!⁵ Both have read far too much into the commonplace mutual abuse of the two parties.

For example, when the Mandator calls the Greens 'Jews, Samaritans, and Manichaeans', it so happens that (unless the

¹ *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu*, translated by R. H. Charles (1916), pp. 167–77, studied by Jarry in two papers (of which I can accept little) in *BIFAO* lxi (1964), 173f. and 187f.

² § 119.18, p. 190 Charles.

³ Appendix C, below.

⁴ See Manojlović, *Byz.* xi (1936), 646, and Karlin-Hayter, *Byz.* xliii (1973), 84f.

⁵ *Syria* xxxvii (1960), 361f.; *Hérésies et factions* (1968), 117f.

text in Theophanes is simply defective) that they only expressly repudiate the first two names.¹ But this does not mean they deserved the third. Had they really been Manichees, the Mandator would not have confused the issue by dragging in the other two names. All three are in fact frequently linked in Byzantine religious abuse.²

Two sentences later the Mandator says: 'Are you all baptized in the name of one God' (εἰς ἕνα)?³ That is to say, on the most straightforward interpretation, he is implying that the Greens are *polytheists*. They reply indignantly, 'I *am* baptized in one God!' (εἰς ἕνα again). It has been alleged that they have deliberately twisted his words into an allusion to their monophysitism. But (as Jarry has remarked⁴) monophysites did *not* in fact administer baptism εἰς ἕνα (i.e. in the name of only one of the persons of the Trinity) any more than did the Chalcedonians. Why doubt that the Greens are simply repudiating the imputation that they are pagans, as they had already repudiated the Mandator's other cheap smears? Indeed, the most interesting thing about the Mandator's accusations is precisely that they are restricted to the meaningless smears of everyday abuse. The one thing he does *not* do is accuse them of a specific doctrinal shortcoming.⁵ We may compare the Greens' own counter-smear: that it is better to be a Jew (ἰουδαίζω) or even a pagan (μᾶλλον δ' ἐλληνίσαι συμφέρει μοι) than a Blue.

Much more significant, immediately before this remark of the Mandator, the Greens reply to another bit of abuse with the words 'If anyone denies that our lord the emperor is orthodox,

¹ *contra* Karlin-Hayter, *Byz.* 1973, 74, their next remark, 'the Mother of God is with us all', is part of their rebuttal of the Mandator's accusation, *not* a 'shocking' claim that the Virgin is with Jews and Samaritans.

² They are constantly evoked by John of Ephesus as the source of all trouble and temptation. 'Manichee' is an insult applied indifferently by Chalcedonian to monophysite and monophysite to Chalcedonian: see R. Paret, *REB* xv (1957), 60, n.1.

³ The interrogative punctuation is mine: see p. 320.

⁴ *Op. cit.* 356.

⁵ The Greens' doubts whether human affairs are really ordained by God (ll.69-71) are not (of course) to be taken seriously (Karlin-Hayter claims it as 'une profession incontestable de dualisme', *Byz.* 1973, 95); it is at once the natural human reaction to the sight of evil prospering and an age-old theme in the schools of rhetoric (see my *Claudian* (1970), 213), designed of course to shock the Mandator by its scepticism but in no way a 'manifestation d'opposition à l'orthodoxie' (*Byz. loc. cit.*).

let him be anathema as Judas.' This puzzling remark has attracted little attention.¹ Yet surely it is just an allusive way of saying that the Greens hold the *same* views as the emperor. To doubt their orthodoxy is like doubting the emperor's. That is to say, they are claiming to be as orthodox as Justinian.

The next text is an acclamation from the Greens in honour of Verina the widow of Leo, preserved in the eighth-century *Parastaseis Syntomai Chronikai*.² The Greens are said to have chanted when she crowned her brother Basiliscus emperor: 'Long live Verina, the orthodox Helen', after which the author comments: 'For she was thoroughly orthodox'.

Now there are difficulties in accepting this story as it stands. In all probability Verina did not crown Basiliscus. Her plan had been to make her lover Patricius emperor with Basiliscus' aid, but the ambitious Basiliscus played her false and seized the throne for himself, after which Verina began plotting for his downfall. The acclamation itself looks authentic, as do several others, preserved in the *Parastaseis*, no doubt taken from factional records (which we know to have existed). Most, like this one, were misplaced (one on Leo III, for example, is applied to Leo I).³ It is perhaps worth mentioning that Verina did in fact crown another Augustus nine years later, the short-lived usurper Leontius. It is unlikely that the acclamation refers to this occasion, since Leontius was crowned in Antioch and never reached Constantinople. But if any two events can be confused the author of the *Parastaseis* usually confuses them, and it could be that he did so here. It would be less easy to explain how and why the acclamation itself might have come to be invented. The simplest solution is that the author inserted an authentic acclamation in a context of his own making.

The word 'orthodox' was not of course the exclusive property of those whom history has considered orthodox. So the fact that the Greens call Verina orthodox does not in itself prove that she was Chalcedonian. Independent evidence is fortunately forthcoming. First the author of the *Parastaseis*, certainly not

¹ P. Maas, *BZ* xxi (1912), 50, inferred that the Greens are combating doubts expressed as to the Emperor's orthodoxy, obviously not appropriate to Justinian in 532.

² § 29, ed. T. Preger (*Script. Origin. Cpol.* i, 1901), p. 37.10: the work dates from the eighth century: see *Porphyrus*, p. 112, n.2.

³ See Appendix D.

himself a monophysite, who specifically comments that Verina was 'orthodox'. Second, her proclamation of Leontius in 484 contains an implicit attack on the monophysite Zeno as a heretic.¹ If Verina was Chalcedonian, then the Greens who acclaim her orthodoxy and name her a second Helen (the mother of Constantine) must themselves have been Chalcedonian.

We have seen how much has been made of the alleged link between the factional and religious sympathies of Emperors. It is thus the more surprising that upholders of the traditional view have generally ignored the one and only text which, with reference to factional rivalry, does actually link an Emperor's orthodoxy with his colour preference.

The passage in question is quoted as a scholion in MSS. Vat. Gr. 997 (saec.x), fol. 184^v of Theophylact Simocatta and Vat. Gr. 52 (saec.xiv-xv), fol. 141^r of Procopius, and evidently derives ultimately from a chronicle, very probably the early seventh-century chronicle of John of Antioch. It describes how, on the birth of his first son on 4 August 583, the Emperor Maurice gratified the Greens by calling him Theodosius:² τῶν οὖν Βενέτων κραζόντων Ἰουστινιανὸν καλεῖσθαι, οἱ Πράσινοι ἔκραζον Θεοδοσίον αὐτὸν καλεῖσθαι διὰ τὸ Θεοδοσίον τὸν βασιλέα ὀρθόδοξον γενέσθαι καὶ πολλὰ ἔτη ζῆσαι. The Blues suggest the name Justinian, and the Greens, on two grounds, Theodosius: Theodosius (evidently Theodosius II) was orthodox, and had lived a long life. Once more, of course, the word 'orthodox' in itself proves nothing either way. And it is true that at the very end of his reign Theodosius II did yield to monophysite pressures, obliging his successor Marcian to re-establish imperial orthodoxy with the Council of Chalcedon.³ So it might well look as if we had there a neat illustration of the traditional view: the Greens, being monophysites, chose the name of a monophysite Emperor in competition with the orthodox name Justinian put forward by the Blues.

However, Theodosius II went down in history as a model of

¹ J. B. Bury, *Later Roman Empire* i² (1923), 397, n.4.

² See P. Maas, *BZ* xxi (1912), 29. For the date 583, P. Grierson, *DOP* xv (1961), 222, n.11 (rather than A. N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (1968), 59, '584 or 585').

³ See C. Luibhéid, 'Theodosius II and Heresy', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* xvi (1965), 13-38, Frend, *Mon. Movement*, 29f.

Christian piety. The influential ecclesiastical historians Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret speak with especial warmth of his piety and godliness.¹ Admittedly they seem either to have written before or to have ignored his last-minute support for the monk Eutyches, but none the less they saved his reputation for posterity. The patriographers even call him *θεοφιλής*² which they would hardly have done if they had known him as a heretic.

Merely on general grounds, then, it seems unlikely that later monophysites would have selected Theodosius (rather than, say, Anastasius) as the archetypal monophysite Emperor.³ More important, it is clear from our scholion that the Blues at any rate did not interpret the Green choice of name in this way: ἤρξαντο οὖν οἱ Βένετοι λέγειν οὕτως· “τὰ δωρηθέντα ἔτη τῷ Ἰουστινιανῷ ὁ θεὸς παράσχη σοι ἐν εἰρήνῃ”, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἐνενήκοντα ἔτη καὶ πλείω. ἢ γὰρ ζωὴ Θεοδοσίου ἐγένετο ἐνιαυτῶν πενήκοντα. That is to say, the Blues find fault, not with the Green claim that Theodosius was orthodox, but simply with Green arithmetic. Theodosius may have reigned longer than Justinian (42 as against 38 years of sole reign), but it was Justinian who actually lived longer (83—not 90 plus—years as against a mere 50). What clearer proof could there be that on this occasion at least orthodoxy was not the major issue between the factions—the more so since Theodosius’ claim to orthodoxy was so shaky, especially when compared with Justinian’s.

For confirmation we may refer to John of Ephesus’ statement that Maurice called his son Theodosius ‘in allusion to Theodosius the second, who was the only one besides from the time of Constantine downwards who was born in the purple’⁴ (i.e. born to a reigning Emperor after his accession).⁵ No reference here to the rival suggestions of the factions, or to the rejected Blue proposal. But no hint either in this rabid monophysite writer that the name Theodosius was chosen for its monophysite associations.

¹ W. E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome* (1968), 199f.

² Preger, *Patria Choleos*, pp. 44.4, 173.10, 261.2 (A and C).

³ Contrast Grégoire’s extravagant claim (*Le Muséeon* lix (1946), 297) that ‘Théodose II était l’empereur pro-monophysite par excellence’.

⁴ *HE* v.14, p. 351 Payne Smith.

⁵ John is mistaken here: Honorius was born on 9 September 384, his father Theodosius I having come to the throne on 19 January 379.

We have no means of knowing why Maurice himself chose Theodosius. His main reason may well have been the one John underlined: that he was the first emperor since Arcadius to sire a son in the purple. And the destined Theodosius III, like Theodosius II, was crowned Augustus as a boy.¹ But it should be clear enough why the factions proposed the names they did. The Blues Justinian simply because Justinian had for so long been *the* Blue emperor; and the Greens Theodosius because Theodosius II was *the* Green emperor.² The improbability of any anti-Chalcedonian associations attaching to the name Theodosius is further underlined by the fact that no less a person than the future Pope Gregory the Great stood as the boy's godfather.³ It may be added that, whatever offence Maurice may have given the Blues on this occasion, he soon atoned for by naming one of his five subsequent sons Justinian.⁴

There are two other examples of the factions naming members of the imperial family—the renaming of the wives of Justin I and Tiberius II on their coronations. It has been suggested that it was for religious reasons that the factions gave Justin's Lupicina the more auspicious name Euphemia.⁵ Euphemia was the name of a favourite saint of Chalcedon, and since a late tradition makes her the patroness of the Council of Chalcedon, authoress by a miracle of its decision, it has been argued that the name came to have anti-monophysite associations. Many objections could be raised. One could point out, for example, that there is nothing to suggest that this name was the idea of the Blues rather than the Greens or both combined (Theophanes refers only to 'the demes'); that we do not even know whether Justin was a Blue, still less Lupicina (that their nephew Justinian was a Blue proves nothing); that even if such evidence did exist, it would be quite false to suggest that Euphemia was 'un mot d'ordre dyophysiste' (Grégoire). Euphemia's feast was

¹ 26 March 590; Theophanes A.M. 6082, with P. Grierson, *DOP* xv (1961), 222, n.13.

² So ardent a partisan was he that he switched the Blue and Green grandstands in the hippodrome so that he could look directly across at the Greens when seated in the Kathisma (Malalas, pp. 350-1).

³ Jo. Diac., *V. Greg.* i.40 (*PL* lxxv.79B), with R. Paret, *REB* xv (1957), 56.

⁴ *Chron. Pasch.* p. 693.13 (another son was called Justin, a name borne by two orthodox Emperors).

⁵ H. Grégoire, 'Sainte Euphémie et l'Empereur Maurice', *Le Muséon* lix (1946), 295f., A. Maricq, *BARB* xxxv (1949), 64, n.2.

regularly included in Coptic, Jacobite, and Ethiopic calendars, and the arch-monophysite Severus of Antioch wrote a hymn in her honour.¹ The tradition of her role at the Council of Chalcedon cannot be traced before the eighth century. But one text will suffice, Theophanes' description of how in November 561 some *Greens* fleeing before Justinian's guards took refuge in the church of Saint Euphemia at Chalcedon.² It is hard to believe that the Greens could not, had they wished, have found another asylum in a city so rich in churches as Constantinople—one that did not involve the crossing of the Bosphorus.

For the renaming of Tiberius' wife we have John of Ephesus again, a contemporary account by one who knew Tiberius personally. The Blues suggested Anastasia, the Greens Helena.³ Now if such names were chosen for their Christological associations, what would Anastasia call to mind but the arch-monophysite Anastasius? Yet this was the choice of the supposedly orthodox Blues. Tiberius approved Anastasia, but John's only comment is that the factions fell to fighting for the honour of naming the Empress. The natural inference is that Anastasia was chosen by the Blues and approved by Tiberius for no other reason than that it was a good Christian name.

The Greens drew attention to Theodosius II's orthodoxy and longevity simply as subsidiary arguments of good omen in favour of the name. Since their interpretation of Theodosius' orthodoxy was not questioned, and in view of the other evidence in favour of their orthodoxy, there seems no reason to doubt that here too they reveal themselves orthodox.

Lastly, we must consider some sixth- or seventh-century inscriptions which on the face of it might seem strong evidence

¹ E. Honigman, *Byzantion* xx (1950), 349; R. Paret, *REB* xv (1957), 62-5; F. Halkin, *Euphémie de Chalcedoine* (Subsid. Hagiogr. 41, 1965), p. xii. On the significance attributed by Grégoire to the sobriquet 'Marcionist' given to Maurice by the crowd in 602, see Paret, pp. 58-60. Hence the scepticism Maurice displayed concerning miracles allegedly worked at Euphemia's shrine (Simocatta, viii.14) cannot be used to support the theory of anti-Chalcedonian sympathies in Maurice (so Grégoire, last note). Such scepticism can perhaps be better understood against the background of the unease at the marked rise in the veneration of such phenomena in the years following the reign of Justinian which eventually exploded in the iconoclast movement: see E. Kitzinger, 'The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm', *DOP* viii (1954), 83-150.

² p. 236.12.

³ iii.9, p. 182 Payne Smith.

in favour of the religious character of the factions. First one from Ephesus:¹

ὀρθοδόξων Πρασίνων	†	χριστιανῶν βασιλέων
‘orthodox Greens’		‘Christian emperors’

This is one of a series of factional inscriptions from Ephesus, all apparently of about the same period.² Two name Phocas and the Blues, one Heraclius and the Greens, the rest just the Greens, with or without unnamed ‘pious emperors’. It is beyond dispute that at the end of his reign Phocas relied on the Blues while the Greens backed Heraclius’ rebellion. Grégoire and Janssens infer that our inscription dates from the very beginning of Phocas’ reign, while he was still well disposed to the Greens. But the plural βασιλέων, while it *could* refer to Phocas and his wife Leontia, is more naturally taken as implying a plurality of emperors; the two inscriptions which name Phocas directly do so as sole emperor.

As before, the use of the word ‘orthodox’ here proves nothing either way. But let us assume that the Greens of Ephesus were in fact monophysite. If so, then the ‘Christian emperors’ they link with their own ‘orthodoxy’ would also be monophysite. Yet at no time during the sixth and seventh centuries was there a plurality of monophysite emperors. Indeed, there was no plurality of emperors of any creed before Heraclius and his son Heraclius the younger (co-emperor from 612). So great was the prestige of Theodora and Justin II’s wife Sophia that they might have been styled βασιλεῖς jointly with their husbands; whether Zeno’s wife Ariadne would have is doubtful. The inscription is probably more recent than that anyway. We have seen already that Anastasius, though married and a monophysite, was not a Green.

It follows that our assumption was mistaken. The ‘orthodox Greens’ of our inscriptions were not monophysites, nor were their ‘Christian emperors’. Heraclius and his son would seem the obvious candidates—especially in view of a parallel inscription from Ephesus directly linking both Heraclius and his son

¹ H. Grégoire, *I.G.C. As. min.* i (1922), no. 114bis, with Y. Janssens, *Byz.* xi (1936), 527 and A. Christophilopulu, *Char. A.K. Orlandos* ii (1966), 351–2.

² Put together by Janssens, *Byz.* xi (1936), 526f., though her (and Grégoire’s) datings are not always sound: cf. too F. Dölger, *BZ* xxxviii (1938), 526–7, and Christophilopulu, *op. cit.* 351f.

with the Greens:¹ ‘*Ηρακλ(ή)ου καὶ Ἡρακλήου τῶν θεωφυλάκτων ἡμῶν δεσποτῶν καὶ τῶν Πρασίνων πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη*. There is in fact no example of an inscription which links an emperor’s name with a faction before Phocas and Heraclius. Phocas seems to have fostered the rivalry of the factions like no emperor before him, and in the civil war the Blues fought valiantly for him (and not in Constantinople alone), the Greens for Heraclius.² Phocas’ patronage is attested as far afield as the Blue club-house in Oxyrhynchus: a column inscribed on one side *τόπος διαφέρων τοῖς Βενέτοις* and the other *Φωκᾶ τοῦ [εὐ]σεβεστάτου ἡμῶν δεσπότου πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη*.³ Particularly suggestive is another Ephesian inscription, *χριστιανῶν βασιλέων καὶ Πρασίνων πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη*, where *Πρασίνων* has been inscribed over an almost but not entirely erased *Βενέτων*.⁴ It is tempting to infer that the inscription originally referred to Phocas but was altered after his defeat and the disgrace of the Blues in 609/10. This would strengthen the case for referring the ‘orthodox Greens’ inscription to Heraclius and his son.

This is one more inscription mentioning Green orthodoxy, from a village on the boundary between Phrygia and Pisidia:⁵ *ὁ θεὸς τῶν ἀρχαγγέλων σύνπ[ρ]αξὸν τοὺς τῆ[ς] κούμης μου πᾶσιν καὶ Πρασίνων τῶν [ᾠ]ρωδόξων*. The sense of this illiterate *cri de cœur* is as follows: ‘God of the archangels, help all the inhabitants of my village (i.e. κώμης) and the orthodox Greens’. It looks as if both villagers and Greens stood in some danger. One thinks of the savage Green persecutions under Phocas,⁶ but obviously there may have been other more local threats to this village.

Whatever the date, there does not seem to be any implied contrast between the orthodox Greens and Blues who are *not*

¹ The last six words were added later.

² Janssens, *Byz.* xi (1936), 522–31, and (more briefly) J. R. Martindale, ‘Public Disorders in the Late Roman Empire’, pp. 94–5. See below, p. 282 f.

³ *Stud. it. di fil.* xix (1912), 305; cf. Christophilopulu, p. 355, nos. 22–3, and pp. 346–7.

⁴ Grégoire, *I.G.C. As. min.* i.114.5, and Christophilopulu p. 351, no. 8.

⁵ Grégoire, *I.G.C. As. min.* i.311, Christophilopulu, p. 353, no. 11 (Janssens’ transcription, *op. cit.* 527, is very inaccurate). For the exact location of the place, L. Robert, *Hellenica* x (1955), 228–39. Grégoire, no. 114 *could* be supplemented as another reference to orthodoxy, but not necessarily; cf. Christophilopulu, p. 353, no. 12. So *could* *SEG* viii.213; cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 74, n.3.

⁶ *Doctrina Jacobi* (see p. 150, n.7), p. 39 for Antioch.

orthodox. The villager appeals to the orthodoxy of his fellow Greens simply in the hope that it may serve to protect them.

The same surely applies to the inscription from Ephesus. The fact that the Greens take pride in their orthodoxy does not necessarily imply that the Blues were *not* orthodox. However much the Greens may have hated Phocas, they could hardly have impugned his Chalcedonianism. This interpretation of such inscriptions is strongly supported by the latest to be found, *νηκε̄ [sic] ἡ τύχη Πρασίνων τῶν ὀρθοδόξων* from Phthiotic Thebes.¹ It is hard to believe that monophysites were strong in this part of the world, or indeed that Phthiotic Thebes was torn by any sort of heresy.

In short, these inscriptions tell us rather less than has been supposed. We have confirmation of what need never have been doubted: that (even at Ephesus) the Greens were orthodox. But they imply nothing one way or the other about the Blues.

v

One scholar has stressed the anti-Semitism of the factions, the Greens in particular.² He has even gone so far as to link the alleged decline of the factions in the seventh century with an alleged 'anti-Semitic crisis' of theseventh century. The emperors are supposed to have encouraged the factions, hitherto always divided, to unite in the persecution of the Jews.

Another edifice built on sand. The factions did *not* 'decline' in the seventh century.³ Nor is there any evidence for massive persecution of Jews between the edicts of Heraclius in 632 and Leo III in 721/2.⁴ Indeed, according to the latest historian of Byzantine Jewry⁵ Heraclius' edict was a 'single violent gesture', without significant effect on either the legal status or the daily life of most Jewish inhabitants of the Empire. But there is evidence for anti-Semitism from the factions and it does merit brief consideration.

There was apparently something of a tradition of it among the Greens of Antioch. According to Malalas a riot was caused

¹ Πρακ. 'Αρχ. 'Εταιρ. 1969 (1971), p. 21.

² G. I. Bratianu, *BZ* xxxviii (1937), 96-7, and more fully in *Rev. hist. du Sud-Est européen* xviii (1941), 49-67.

³ See Ch. XI.

⁴ J. Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire* (1939), 1.

⁵ A. Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade* (1971), 53-7.

there under Zeno by the Jews sitting with the Blues in the hippodrome¹ (we may now compare the theatre of Aphrodisias, where graffiti by both Blues and Jews appear on the same row of seats).² Porphyrius led the Greens to burn a synagogue at Daphne in 507.³ We hear also how an ascetic monk urged the Greens to burn another synagogue, after which they dug up a Jewish graveyard and burned such remains as they found. Zeno sent a message expressing his anger—anger that they hadn't burned live Jews as well!⁴ But it would be wholly misleading to suggest that the issue around which factional rivalry revolved in Antioch was Judaism. It is perfectly clear from our distastefully abundant sources that Jews were held in almost universal dislike among Christians by the fifth and sixth centuries. They had been persecuted at Antioch long before the Blues and Greens,⁵ and it is likely that the Blues of Zeno's day protected Jews less out of disinterested philo-Judaism⁶ than simply to annoy the Greens.

Moreover, it is not as though there was a consistent pattern of protection by the Blues and persecution by the Greens. This may have been what usually happened at Antioch, but elsewhere the story might be different. The memoirs of a Palestinian Jew called Jacob, forcibly converted to Christianity under Heraclius' law of 632, are most illuminating here. Before his conversion Jacob's chief aim in life had been to pay Christians back for the persecution he had suffered at their hands. To this end he often took advantage of factional riots. When in Rhodes he laid about some Blues pretending to be a Green.⁷ In Constantinople, on the other hand, he handed Christians over to the Blues alleging that they were 'Greens and Jews'. On another

¹ fr. 35, *Exc. de Ins.* p. 167-7.

² See p. 79.

³ Malalas, pp. 395-8.

⁴ Malalas, fr. 35, *Exc. de Ins.* p. 167.10f. The Greek text (only an excerpt) does not specify Antioch, a detail preserved only in the Church Slavonic version (transl. Spinka and Downey 1940), pp. 109-12.

⁵ Though despite Bratianu (*Rev. Hist.* 1941, 57), Malalas, p. 244.15f. does not link either Blues or Greens with anti-Semitism at Antioch under Caligula, as a careful reading of the passage will show. It hardly matters, since the reference to Blues and Greens here is an anachronism in any case (p. 200).

⁶ Though for a remarkable *a priori* argument in favour of the intrinsic 'Blueness' of Jews, see Karlin-Hayter, *Byz.* 1973, 96f. The Greens' μεταβαίνω καὶ τότε ἰουδαίζω in their dialogue with the Mandator is not (of course) a genuine statement of intent, but simply said to scandalize him, a blasphemous joke.

⁷ *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati*, ed. N. Bonwetsch, *Abh. d. Kön. Ges. d. Wiss. z. Göttingen*, Phil-histor. Klasse N.F. xii.3 (1910), p. 89.

occasion there he set about Greens himself, pretending to be a Blue. And when he heard that Phocas' lieutenant Bonosus was persecuting Greens in Antioch, to Antioch hurried the resourceful and single-minded Jacob, where he again set about Greens in the guise of a Blue. But when the star of the Blues set with the fall of their patron Phocas, there was Jacob waiting in Constantinople to set about Bonosus in the midst of a Green lynch party.¹

A fascinating saga. But what does it actually prove except that either faction might persecute Jews, and that Jews in turn might take their revenge on either faction? That is to say, Jews can hardly be regarded as an issue that could be counted upon to *divide* the factions. In an age when most Christians disliked Jews, it is small gain to discover that the Blues and Greens did too.

The well-documented affair at Antioch in 507 will repay closer study. The burning of the synagogue was an incidental consequence, not the original purpose, of the hippodrome riot. It is important to appreciate the significance of the fact that Malalas traces the violence directly to the arrival of Porphyrius in Antioch. Had Malalas been less explicit we might have pictured Porphyrius as an agitator, exploiting his personal popularity for racial and political ends. In fact Malalas makes it quite clear that it was simply by winning for them in the Hippodrome that Porphyrius inflamed the Greens to the pitch where they were capable of such atrocities. Kings of the hippodrome once more after a series of defeats, the elation of the Greens erupted into a violence that consumed all comers: not just Jews nor even Blues, but police, troops, and three successive counts of the East.

Socrates describes a battle between Jews and Christians at Alexandria in 412 that had mushroomed out of a dispute about pantomime dancers.² It is clear that anti-Semitism was again the consequence rather than the cause of the trouble. 'The people rioted', says Socrates, 'for no important reason, but because of that inveterate evil in all cities, enthusiasm for dancing.' Once tempers were lost and the violence had begun,

¹ *Doctrina Jacobi*, p. 39. The author of the Jewish Midrash discussed above, presumably written with reference to (if not at) Constantinople, was apparently a Blue (pp. 67, 93).

² *HE* vii.13.

the original cause might be lost to view and (as at Antioch, and often elsewhere before and since) the unhappy Jews found themselves the victims.

We may, I think, reject altogether the view that Blues and Greens represented permanently the orthodox and monophysite parties—or indeed any other sectarian movements. Despite the lack of direct evidence about the Blues, there is no cause to doubt that both were in general orthodox. Had either not been so, there is a very simple reason why we should have heard.

Games had always had a religious significance at Rome,¹ and circus racing was no exception. Ovid has left us a particularly vivid account of the procession of the gods that opened a day's racing.² An image of each was carried round the arena on a litter to the applause of the spectators—with the mischievous young Ovid, all thoughts on his girl, reserving his claps for Venus and Victoria! This feature of the games did not of course make them any more acceptable to Christians already predisposed to object on general moral grounds, as (*inter alia*) the *De Spectaculis* of Tertullian shows.

Naturally enough the victory of Christianity changed the nature of these religious ceremonies. But this is not all that it brought. The religious element became increasingly important. As he entered the hippodrome the Emperor would greet his subjects with the sign of the Cross and they would hail him as God's earthly representative. The factions would sing hymns, the charioteers would leave the arena and drive to the nearest church to give thanks after their victories.

The ceremonial which became such an important part of faction activity will be discussed more fully in Ch. IX. For the moment it will suffice to stress the high religious content in their most ordinary utterances. 'Glory to God who strengthens the orthodox. Glory to God who casts down the deniers of the Trinity. Glory to God who destroys the deniers of the Mother of God.' These are typical extracts from the ceremonial for an imperial victory.³ In their present form these acclamations date from the tenth century, but plainly they go back a long way. This sort of pressure towards orthodoxy was already a central

¹ See most recently Balsdon, *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome* (1969), 244f.

² *Amores* iii.2.

³ *De Caer.* i.69, 322R = ii.135-6V.

feature of religious life in the fifth century. When the Empress Ariadne appeared in the hippodrome on 10 April 491 to proclaim the successor to Zeno, 'an orthodox emperor for the world' was the chant that naturally came to the lips of the people as they looked up at her in expectation.¹ 'We give you an orthodox and holy man', she said in reply.²

Now the Blues and Greens were spokesmen for all who gathered in the hippodrome. Had they really differed so radically in their respective interpretations of orthodoxy as modern scholars maintain, this would have become obvious within minutes on every race day, and it is unlikely that the racing would ever have got started. The orthodox would have provoked a heretical chant from their rivals and before long the other spectators would have joined in on one side or the other. Quite apart from the fact that there is no evidence that this ever happened, much less regularly, no emperor could have tolerated such a permanent incentive to religious division. Quite the contrary. One of the main purposes of the religious side of hippodrome ceremonial was to serve as an incentive to religious *solidarity*; to create and foster the all important theme of an emperor appointed by God as the protector of the faithful and champion of orthodoxy.

There is no need to assume that the factions were any *less* concerned about religion than their fellow men. Orthodoxy was vital to the Byzantine, and he well knew the many pitfalls that beset the path of the true believer. No doubt from time to time the Blues and Greens took part with the next man in the doctrinal crises of the day. In the four cases we know of—Constantinople in 512 and 820, Alexandria in the late 480s, and Antioch in 583—it so happens that the threat served to unite them. We must allow the possibility that on other occasions it may have divided them, though in view of the complete lack of evidence in our sources it looks as though such occurrences were both infrequent and uncharacteristic.

¹ i.92, 418.19R.

² p. 521.13R.

omitted from p. 126, n. 4: So too even W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (1972), e.g. 157–8, 175, 263, though Frend rightly emphasizes that there is no clearcut antithesis between orthodoxy and monophysitism ('relatively a modern concept') before the second half of Justinian's reign—that is to say no easy polarization such as could in any case have provided a credible focus for the all too clearcut rivalry of Blues and Greens.

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PART II

Introduction

THUS far the argument has been mainly destructive, inevitably so given the false assumptions of previous work in the field.

But a number of positive conclusions have emerged on the way, most notably that the focus of *all* Blue and Green activity is to be sought, not in some imaginary 'deme-structure' of the cities, nor in a hardly more real 'urban militia', nor yet in social and religious groupings, but (as common sense might already have suggested) in the hippodrome (and, as we shall see, theatre) itself. We saw also that contemporaries regularly thought of Blues and Greens as the *youth* of the cities, further ground for believing that they really were what their names imply, circus and theatre fan clubs.

So rather than start from the assumption that the Blues and Greens of the late Empire are political parties in their own right, without bothering to offer more than a half-hearted guess as to how such parties came to develop from (of all things) circus fan clubs, let us instead trace the development of circus fan clubs (Chs. VIII–IX), and examine the role of the hippodrome and theatre in the political life of the Principate (Ch. VII). If we can but rid ourselves of this unwarranted assumption that the games themselves were only the thinnest of façades for political activity (try telling a Byzantine that *anything* was more important than the games!), we shall discover a perfectly rational explanation for the remarkable transformation of the Blues and Greens of the Principate, in terms of the changing organization of the games (Ch. VIII) and the traditional relationship of the emperor and his people at the games (Ch. VII).

If we approach the factions through the games, we shall also discover that the traditional view presents altogether too schematized and static a picture even of the factions of the late Empire. Not merely have scholars overlooked the elements of continuity between the early and late Empire: they have drawn

the boundary between them in the wrong place. The peculiar characteristics of the Byzantine factions have been traced right back to the foundation of Constantinople, whereas they do not in fact emerge till the end of the fifth century. On the other hand, by the early seventh they have changed again. And the development continued, with the factions climbing to a peak of importance (though a quite different sort of importance) in the ninth and tenth centuries—a period when on the traditional view they had long been stripped of their former power.

VII. The Emperor and His People at the Games

It has long been customary to draw a sharp contrast between the feckless, degenerate, work-shy plebs of early imperial Rome concerned only with its bread and circuses, and the alert, fearless, freedom-loving people of Constantinople, represented by the circus factions. It would be hard to say which side of the contrast is more false.

Naturally enough this one chapter cannot hope (and does not attempt) to treat the relationship between plebs and princeps in all its manifestations throughout the Principate.¹ In keeping with the purpose of this book it will concentrate on their common meeting place in the theatres and circuses of Rome. Not the only approach to the question, of course, but a more direct route to the wider issues than might at first sight appear.

'The hundreds of thousands of Roman citizens who lived in Rome', wrote Rostovtzeff, '... readily acquiesced in the gradual reduction of the popular assembly under Augustus to a mere formality; they offered no protest when Tiberius suppressed even this formality, but they insisted on their right, acquired under the civil war, to be fed and amused by the government.'² This is not untrue, but it is a rather misleading formulation. It is of course true enough that in A.D. 15 the people lost the right to elect praetors and consuls. But what were praetors and consuls to the people of A.D. 15? It was to the princeps that the

¹ For the Julio-Claudians there is now Z. Yavetz's useful study *Plebs and Princeps* (1969). For the later Principate, little but Friedlaender, and C. R. Whittaker, *Historia* xiii (1964), 348-69 (often inaccurate). There is not much that is relevant in *Die Rolle der Plebs in spätrömischen Reich*, ed. V. Beševliev and W. Seyfarth (Berlin 1969). In general see R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order* (1966), 163f. and T. W. Africa, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* ii (1971), 3f.

² *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*² (1957), 79-80. For a firm rebuttal of this stern view of the Roman plebs see Balsdon, 'Panem et circenses', *Homm. M. Renard* ii (1969), 57f.; also my Inaugural Lecture *Bread and Circuses* (London 1974), on which I have freely drawn.

people now turned in their hour of need. The vote which they lost had long since ceased to be a valid or significant means either of expressing their will or attaining their ends. Nothing illustrates this more clearly than Gaius' unsuccessful attempt to reintroduce popular elections in 38; the people were not interested, nor were there even enough candidates forthcoming.¹ On matters which really concerned them (the price of corn, high taxes, unjust decisions) they could—and did—address specific complaints directly to the one person who could—and often did—offer some redress: the emperor.

Let us begin with what Cicero had to say a century before Gaius discovered the same truth. 'There are three places above all', he wrote in 56 B.C. 'where the will of the people makes itself known: public assemblies (*contiones*), elections (*comitia*), and the games (*ludorum gladiatorumque consessu*)'.² The first two had degenerated so far, Cicero roundly declared, that it was only at the games that the true feelings of the people could be discerned: 'the expression of popular opinion which we see at elections and public meetings is sometimes spurious and rehearsed; and while it may be possible to raise a thin smattering of cheers at the theatres or gladiatorial shows with a rented crowd, none the less it is easy enough to see how it is done and who is behind it—and how the majority of honest citizens react.'³

Again, when writing to Atticus in 44: 'if you have any news of practical consequence, let me have it in your reply; if not, tell me all about the demonstrations in the theatre and the actors' jests.'⁴ The point is perfectly illustrated by the famous letter of July 59, describing the roars of the crowd as the actor Diphilus delivered line after line at Pompey's expense. 'When Caesar entered,' Cicero continued, 'applause was non-existent. He was followed by Curio junior, who received the sort of ovation Pompey used to get in the days before freedom fell. Caesar took it badly, and a letter is said to be winging its way to Pompey in Capua.'⁵ In the *pro Sestio* Cicero lists a whole series of lines (§§ 120–6) which various theatre audiences twisted into

¹ Dio, lix.9.6; cf. Jones, *Studies in Roman Government and Law* (1960), 49; Yavetz, *Plebs and Princeps*, 103f.

² *Pro Sestio* 106. ³ *Ibid.* 115.

⁴ *Ad Att.* xiv.3.2 (transl. Shackleton Bailey).

⁵ *Ad Att.* ii.19.3 (same transl.); at *Ad Att.* i.16.11 Cicero refers to demonstrations in his own honour at various games in 61.

allusions to his own achievements or his plight in exile. The line that pleased him most was from Accius' *Brutus*,

Tullius, qui libertatem civibus stabiliverat,

where the Tullius is of course Servius Tullius, not Marcus Tullius! We may contrast the line declaimed by the mime-writer Laberius himself before Caesar,¹

Porro, Quirites, libertatem perdimus.

Late in 44 Cicero alleges that there were demonstrations in favour of Brutus during a performance of another play of Accius at the Ludi Apollinares of July.² No doubt these 'plausus vel testimonia potius et indicia populi Romani' were called forth by double entendres of the usual type.³ In 46 there had been a demonstration in the theatre about the validity of Fabius Maximus' consulate.⁴

'The exaggerated importance attached by Cicero to these demonstrations has often been remarked', comments a recent editor.⁵ There is some exaggeration, certainly. The long passage in the *pro Sestio* contrasting *contiones* and *comitia* unfavourably with the games is inevitably coloured by the events of 58. The *contiones* and *comitia* which had led to Cicero's exile must have been gerrymandered and unrepresentative; while the demonstrations in his favour (and Clodius' disfavour) in the theatres were evidently spontaneous majority reactions. Yet some of the passages quoted above antedate Cicero's exile, nor was he alone in his view. Caelius took the trouble to give him a graphic account of the people hissing Hortensius in the theatre when he was preening himself on a particularly unscrupulous victory in

¹ Macrobius, *Sat.* ii.7.4.

² *Phil.* i.36, cf. ii.31. On the complicated history of these games, largely financed by Brutus as urban praetor but actually put on in Brutus' absence by Antony's brother, see Denniston's commentary, p. 91. At the time, Cicero had not been so impressed with these demonstrations (cf. *Ad Att.* xvi.2.3), and modern works offer diametrically opposed interpretations; e.g. compare R. Syme, *Roman Revolution* (1939), 107, with H. B. Mattingly, *Historia* 1960, 427 and S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (1971), 369.

³ I am very nearly convinced by H. B. Mattingly (*Historia* 1960, 414f.) that Naevius' line 'fato Metelli fiunt Romae consules' was first applied to the Metelli in a similar political revival of c. 115 B.C.

⁴ Suetonius, *Jul.* 80.3, with G. V. Sumner, *Phoenix* xxv (1971), 537.

⁵ Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero's Letters to Atticus* i (1965), 389.

the courts.¹ Atticus too wrote of a demonstration in favour of the 'Liberators' at a theatre in April 44.² And Cicero alleges that Piso will not dare to go to the games held to celebrate the dedication of Pompey's theatre in 55 because he is afraid of being hissed.³

The validity of Cicero's instinct is confirmed by the fact that, long after *contiones* and *comitia* had disappeared, the people continued to express their hopes, fears, and resentments freely and often forcibly at the public shows. No emperor was able to curb this 'theatri licentia'⁴ and many had to bow before it, in matters large and small. To take the sort of phenomenon that Cicero had always felt to be particularly representative of public opinion, nothing, it seems, could dampen the enthusiasm of mime-writers and actors for contemporary allusions—or the readiness with which Roman audiences picked them up.

On one occasion the line 'Videsne ut cinaedus orbem digito temperat' (in fact referring to a priest of the Magna Mater striking a tambourine) was taken—and no doubt intended by the actor—as a homosexual allegation about Augustus.⁵ A reference to an 'old goat licking the does (*capreae*)' was taken to denote Tiberius' supposed debaucheries on Capri.⁶ Galba's ill-omened entry into Rome in 69 was hit at by a line in a farce, and the people sang the whole song with one voice, to the accompaniment of suitable gestures.⁷ The unlettered Maximin was (perhaps fortunately) unable to understand a *risqué* song addressed to him in Greek by a bold actor.⁸

It is a sure index of the quasi-official licence allowed in the theatres that it is only the traditional 'bad' emperors who reacted violently to such ribaldries. For example, Gaius and Domitian are the only emperors recorded to have actually executed actors for double entendres.⁹ The most outrageous

¹ *Ad Fam.* viii.2.1.

² *Ad Att.* xiv.2.1, with Shackleton Bailey's note.

³ *In Pis.* 65: 'da te populo, committe ludis. sibilum metuis? . . . ne acclametur times?'

⁴ Tacitus, *Ann.* i.77.1; cf. xi.13.1 'theatralis populi lascivia'; xiii.24.1 'theatralis licentia'; xii.25.4 'ludicra licentia'.

⁵ Suet., *Aug.* 68—an allegation illustrated by Calvus' lampoon on Pompey (Morel, *Frag. Po. Lat.*² (1927), no. 18, p. 86), which derives from the taunts of Clodius' thugs (Plutarch, *Pomp.* 48.7).

⁶ Suet., *Tib.* 45.

⁷ Suet., *Galba* 13.

⁸ *SHA Max.* viii.3-5 (possibly invented).

⁹ Suet., *Calig.* 27.4; *Dom.* 10.

example is the occasion, soon after Agrippina had joined Claudius in untimely death, when a certain Datus sang the popular song 'Goodbye father, goodbye mother' before Nero, miming first drinking and then swimming gestures!¹ All Nero did was exile the man from Italy, 'either because he did not care about such insults', remarks Suetonius, 'or so as not to encourage others by showing himself offended'. Nero understood better than any emperor since Augustus (and most of his successors too) how to win the people's favour, or (in crises where favour was beyond reach) how least to incur their hostility.² The good Marcus stolidly sat through the most excruciating puns on the name of his wife's supposed lover,³ and even his less tolerant son Commodus merely exiled actors who poked fun at his debauchery.⁴ It was probably in part at least this sort of thing that Tacitus had in mind when he wrote of the 'seditious' behaviour of actors that led Tiberius to suppress the 'Oscan farce' in 23.⁵

Interestingly enough, in view of the widespread conviction that the late Empire saw a marked increase in the expression of popular opinion in the theatres, this particular practice is never to my knowledge recorded in fifth- or sixth-century Constantinople. Apart from one or two possible examples from fourth-century Antioch,⁶ all the early Byzantine period as a whole can offer is the dubious evidence of Choricius for the boldness of mimes in sixth-century Gaza.⁷ It would be unwise to press the argument from silence, but it certainly does not look as if the

¹ Suet., *Nero* 39.3, with a list of other lampoons and the like tolerated by Nero (perhaps only in the early years of his reign: cf. H. B. Mattingly, *CR* 1959, 104).

² See Yavetz, *Plebs and Princeps*, 122f.

³ *SHA Marcus* xxix.3.

⁴ *SHA Comm.* iii.4. (though x.2 shows him less tolerant later in the reign).

⁵ *Ann.* iv.14.3—i.e. the Atellana, which was back before long.

⁶ See G. Haddad, *Aspects of Social Life in Antioch in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (Diss. Chicago 1949), 142f., for incidents involving Julian and Jovian. The jibes, parodies, and so forth mentioned in this connection are not explicitly located in the theatre, but in view of the role of the theatre in demonstrations in late fourth-century Antioch (Pctit, *Libanius* (1955), 224f.; Liebeschuetz, *Antioch* (1972), 278-80), it is a reasonable presumption that some at least took place there. For the early empire cf. *HA Verus* 7.4, 'multa ioca in theatro in eum dicta exstant' (to be used with hesitation, since 'exstant' in the *HA* is usually a pointer to forgery: cf. Barnes, *JRS* 1967, 72).

⁷ *Apol. Mim.* 119f. (pp. 371-2 Foerster/Richsteig)—dubious because the speech is a highly artificial and specious defence of the mime, arguing *inter alia* and contrary to all our other evidence that, while chariot-racing sets the soul on fire, the mime merely provides harmless entertainment (§114, contrast pp. 223f. below).

emperors of Constantinople had as much to endure in the theatre as their predecessors in Rome.

Much has always been made of the remarkable complaint addressed to Justinian by the Greens, placed by Theophanes among the antecedents to the Nika revolt in January 532.¹ It is certainly a strange and interesting conversation, but those who argue (or imply) that this sort of interchange is a new development of the Byzantine period are evidently unaware what a thoroughly Roman tradition it is. Vasiliev (to quote but one example) interpreted the dialogue as a desperate attempt by Justinian to 'negotiate with the people'.² In fact it is no more than a particularly well-documented illustration of the circus petition, exceptional only because by the purest chance a stenographer's record of the actual exchange between emperor and people has come down to us.³

From Augustus on it became normal and common for the people to make requests of the emperor at the circus and theatre—requests to which he was morally obliged at least to reply. This was not (of course) the only place where such petitions might be presented, but whereas it was easy enough to deal with petitions presented by individuals or small groups strictly in accordance with the merits of the case, any request made publicly in front of up to 250,000 fellow citizens was potentially political—and not easy to resist. And there can be no doubt that it was at the circus and theatre above all that the Roman emperor was answerable to the voice of his people, on matters great and small alike.

No text better illustrates both the thing itself and the consequences of its injudicious handling than Josephus' account of a circus meeting held a few weeks before the murder of Gaius in January 41:⁴

At this time occurred chariot races. This is a kind of sport to which the Romans are fanatically devoted. They gather enthusiastically in the circus *and there the assembled throngs make requests of the emperors according to their own pleasure. Emperors who rule that such petitions are to be granted automatically are highly popular.* So in this case they desperately entreated Gaius to cut down imposts and grant some relief

¹ See Appendix C.

² *History of the Byzantine Empire* (1952), 157.

³ See p. 327.

⁴ *AJ* xix.24.7(4), in Feldman's translation (with one or two alterations).

from the burden of taxes. But he had no patience with them, and when they shouted louder and louder, he dispatched agents among them in all directions with orders to arrest any who shouted, to bring them forward at once and to put them to death. The order was given and those whose duty it was carried it out. The number of those executed in such summary fashion was very large. The people, when they saw what happened, stopped their shouting and controlled themselves, for they could see with their own eyes that the request for fiscal concessions resulted quickly in their own death. *This strengthened still further Chaerea's determination to embark on the plot and to put an end to Gaius and his brutal fury against mankind.* Often at entertainments [i.e. circus or theatre shows]¹ he had been on the point of acting, yet nevertheless refrained when he calculated his chances. He no longer had any hesitation in his resolve to kill the man, but his search for the best moment continued, since he wished not to resort to violence fruitlessly, but to ensure the success of his plans.

In so far as the aim of the demonstration was to get taxes reduced, it must be judged a failure. The same applies to what appears to have been a series of such occasions described together by Dio under the year 39:²

the emperor no longer showed any favours even to the populace, but opposed absolutely everything they wished, and consequently the people on their part resisted all his desires. *The talk and behaviour that might be expected at such a juncture, with an angry ruler on one side and a hostile people on the other, were plainly in evidence.* The contest between them, however, was not an equal one: for the people could do nothing but talk and show something of their feelings by their gestures, whereas Gaius would destroy his opponents, dragging away many even while they were witnessing the games and arresting many more after they had left the theatres.

Yet there was no mistaking the significance of such manifestations as a guide to the waning popularity of Gaius, and there can be little doubt that Josephus was right about the effect of the demonstration of 41 on the resolve of his future assassin. Nor will the praetorians who dragged Claudius out from behind his

¹ As can be seen from the eventual plan to kill him during the *ludi Palatini* (*AJ* xix.75-6, cf. note B on p. 251 of the Loeb edition). The 'Pisonian' conspirators of 65 similarly plotted to kill Nero at the games (Tacitus, *Ann.* xv.48f.). And cf. the plot against Commodus described by Herodian. i.10.5f.

² *lix.* 13.3-4.

curtain after the deed was done have forgotten that when he had presided at the games in Gaius' place, the people greeted him with the cry 'Hail, brother of Germanicus'.¹ However unsuitable Claudius might have seemed to those who knew him, his reception in the circus plainly marked him out as a candidate acceptable to the masses.

And if the protest of 41 was itself fruitless, the same could not be said of all such protests. In 19, for example, Tiberius agreed to fix prices after a popular outcry against the expense of corn.² Again, in 58, when the people demonstrated against those responsible for the collection of indirect taxes, Nero at once reviewed the entire system, winning even Tacitus' admiration for his measures.³ And it was in direct response to a circus demonstration in Antioch that Julian set out on his ill-fated attempt to control corn prices there in 362-3.⁴

Indeed, Josephus' remark that the emperors normally granted petitions made at the games is amply borne out by the examples that have come down to us.⁵ The complaisant Titus made a promise (which he kept) before a gladiatorial show that he would grant *anything* he was asked.⁶ The stern Tiberius once made the mistake of moving a statue he happened to like from the baths of Agrippa to his own palace. At his next visit to the theatre the people insisted that he put it back.⁷ After another such experience, when he was 'forced' (*coactus*) to manumit an actor, he simply gave up attending the games, 'so that he should not be faced with petitions'⁸—an omission for which he was never forgiven by the people.⁹ Contrast the younger

¹ Suet., *Claud.* 7.

² Tacitus, *Ann.* ii.87 (for Tiberius' concern with the corn supply on other occasions, see Yavetz, *Plebs and Princesps*, 107).

³ Tacitus, *Ann.* xiii.50; neither here nor in ii.87 is there specific mention of circus or theatre, but (as Furneaux remarks ad loc.) where else could it have been? The same would apply to the dialogue between Alexander Severus and the people on the same issue at *HA Alex.* 22.7—were it not fictitious (see p. 168, n. 1 below).

⁴ Libanius, *Or.* xviii.195 (bibliography in Norman's note ad loc., Loeb ed. i (1969), 408).

⁵ On the general principle of the emperor's obligation to deal with his subjects' petitions cf. the story about Hadrian in Dio lxix.6.3, with F. Millar, 'Emperors at Work', *JRS* 1967, 9f., (though it should be added that the same story is also told of Philip II (Plut., *Apophth.* reg. 31, 179c), Demetrius (Plut., *Dem.* 42, 909c) and Antipater (Stob. xiii.28)).

⁶ Suet., *Tit.* 8.2.

⁷ Pliny, *NH* xxxiv.62.

⁸ Suet., *Tib.* 45.

⁹ On Tiberius' relations with the people, see now Yavetz, *Plebs and Princesps*, 103-13.

Pliny's (somewhat idealized) account of Trajan's gladiatorial games:

Requests were granted, unspoken wishes were anticipated, and he did not hesitate to press us urgently to make fresh demands; yet still there was something new to surpass our dreams. How freely too the spectators could express their enthusiasm and show their preferences without fear.¹

No less illuminating, when refusing petitions emperors were evidently expected to offer an explanation or justification of their refusal, even in the most (apparently) trifling cases. For example, when asked to manumit a charioteer, Hadrian replied that it was not proper for him to free another man's slave.² Marcus refused repeated requests to free the trainer of a man-eating lion because (he said) he did not approve of what the man had taught his pet.³ When the people clamoured incessantly 'in all the theatres and circuses' for the head of Tigellinus Galba justified his refusal to comply by issuing a statement weakly (and falsely) alleging that Tigellinus would soon be dead of consumption anyway.⁴ A long exchange is reported between Claudius and a theatre audience concerning the whereabouts of the pantomime Mnester (popularly believed to have been closeted at the time with the Empress Messalina). In order to convince the crowd that he really did not know where Mnester was, Claudius was reduced to swearing a public oath.⁵ When Augustus was faced with a demonstration from the equites against his law encouraging marriage, he replied by 'sending for the children whom his grand-daughter Agrippina had borne to Germanicus, and publicly displayed them, some sitting on his own knee, the rest on their father's—and made it quite clear by his affectionate looks and gestures that it would not be at all a bad thing if the knights imitated that young man's example.'⁶

Now for the behaviour of the 'bad' emperors. In 32 'much wilder demands than usual were made of the emperor in the

¹ *Paneg.* 33.2–3 (transl. B. Radice).

² Dio lxi.16.3.

³ Dio lxxi.29.4. cf. in general *Digest* xl.9.17.1, 'divus Marcus prohibuit ex adclamatione populi manumittere'.

⁴ Plutarch, *Galba* 17.

⁵ Dio lx.28.3f.

⁶ Suet., *Aug.* 34 (translated by Robert Graves).

theatre' about the price of corn. Tiberius (who was evidently unable or unwilling to lower or fix the price as he had in 19) brought pressure to bear on the senate and consuls to curb such behaviour, but issued no pronouncement himself. However, 'his silence was not taken for modesty, as he had hoped, but for arrogance'.¹ If he could not oblige his people, the least an emperor could do was tell them himself.

Gaius provides several further examples. When asked for one 'Tetrinius the bandit' (a gladiator he did not like), Gaius petulantly replied that all who asked for him were Tetrinii (i.e. bandits) themselves.² On another occasion when the people cheered for a performer he did not like, he made his famous wish 'that the Roman people had but one neck'. At this the people lost all interest in the games and began to clamour for Gaius' informers. Gaius refused to reply and left immediately for Campania.³ These were not the ways of the *civilis princeps*. Years later Diocletian and Constantine likewise left Rome because they could not take the behaviour of the people,⁴ but they were soldier-emperors, less accustomed perhaps to the traditions of the Roman circus. Later visitors were more careful. Constantius II was 'delighted by the banter of the people',⁵ and Theodosius I exchanged jibes with them in the best tradition.⁶ But Theodosius' spoilt son Honorius was not up to the role, and he too left the city in haste and dudgeon.⁷

Domitian's behaviour is particularly instructive. When asked at the Capitoline games to pardon a man he had expelled from the senate, he refused to reply and ordered the crowd through a herald to be silent.⁸ Such contempt for what were evidently the established courtesies of the ritual caused great offence. Years later, an emperor who usually managed to be on good terms with the people, Hadrian, in a similar fit of impatience

¹ Tacitus, *Ann.* vi.13.

² Suet., *Calig.* 30.2.

³ *Ibid.*; Dio lix.13.7.

⁴ Lactantius, *de morte persec.* 17; Zosimus, iv.30.1.

⁵ Ammianus, xvi.10.13.

⁶ 'alternos cum plebe iocos', Claudian *VI Cons. Hon.* 6of.

⁷ Theophanes, p. 76.20 de Boor; Malalas, p. 349.12, with my *Claudian*, p. 384.

⁸ Suet., *Dom.* 13.1 (quoted without comment as an illustration of his 'arrogantia').

It should be added, however, that Domitian put a lot of effort and money into his games (cf. Suet., *Dom.* 4), and the black reputation he enjoyed with our senatorial sources should not deceive us into supposing he was equally unpopular with the people. Juvenal iv.153-4 is a notoriously false explanation of his fall.

ordered his herald to give what Dio, writing a century later still, calls 'that famous reply of Domitian, "silence"'.¹ The herald lifted his arm and, as the crowd fell silent in expectation, instead of delivering the proclamation he simply said 'that's what he wants' (τοῦτο θέλει). Hadrian was delighted.

Indeed, it seems that the use of a herald was in itself an unpopular means of communication. Dio quotes as an illustration of Claudius' *savoir-faire* at the games the way he used heralds seldom, circulating his replies on tablets or placards wherever possible.² We may compare Plutarch's comment on Flamininus' proclamation of the freedom of the Greeks: 'Nero again in our own time . . . declared the Greeks free and independent, except that Titus proclaimed it by means of a herald, while Nero mounted on a platform in the market place and made the announcement himself.'³ On the famous occasion when Androclus was spared by his lion, the decision of the emperor (? Claudius) to free both was taken after the facts of the case had been made known in this way.⁴ To soften the blow of a refused petition Hadrian circulated an explanation in writing.⁵

The herald was impersonal (though perhaps better than no reply at all), a tablet written perhaps in the emperor's own hand the height of courtesy. Of course there will have been many requests so straightforward that the emperor could make his attitude clear by word or gesture alone.⁶ Hence the frequency of references to gesture, as (for example) in the reply of Augustus just quoted. The theatrical presentation of Germanicus' family perhaps owes something to the time-honoured tradition of Roman forensic histrionics, but at the same time it was the most effective way of putting across his point to an audience most of whom could not have heard him (at least in a circus) and would yet appreciate a personal response.

It may be that by the later Empire the feeling against heralds was waning. Despite Dio's remarks on the subject, the 'good' Emperor Alexander Severus under whom he wrote is reported to have used a herald when replying favourably to a complaint

¹ τοῦτο δὲ τὸ τοῦ Δομτιανοῦ, Σιωπήσατε, Dio lxix.6.

² lx.13.

³ *Tit. Flam.* 12.13.

⁴ Apion, ap. Gellius, *NA* v.14.29 = *FGI^H* 616 F5.

⁵ διὰ πινακίου γραφῆς, Dio lxix.16.3.

⁶ For a good example, note the popular reply by gesture described by Martial, *De Spect.* 20.

about corn prices.¹ Gallienus too is reported to have communicated with amphitheatre audiences through a herald.² Thereafter, our evidence suggests that emperors normally (if not invariably) addressed circus and theatre audiences through heralds, certainly at Constantinople. The great dialogue between Justinian and the Greens in 532 was conducted on Justinian's part through a *mandator*, and there are references to fifth- and sixth-century emperors issuing *mandata* to circus audiences³ or speaking to them through a silentary or *libellensis*.⁴ Maurice in 602 was content to have an announcement designed to win him popular support at a crucial moment made through heralds.⁵

If there really was a change in practice here between the early and late Empire, we would have another respect in which relations between emperor and people at the games grew less, not more close in the late Empire.⁶

Seen in this perspective, the behaviour of the fifth- and sixth-century emperors to circus crowds is by no means as deferential as has usually been assumed. It has been argued that the people

¹ *SHA Alex.* 22.7; probably not true (T. D. Barnes, *Bonner HA Colloquium 1968/69* (1970), 34f.), but none the less interesting for that; see p. 176, n.2.

² *SHA Gall.* 12.

³ Justin II *ἔπεμψε μανδάτα* to the *μέρη* (Theophanes, p. 243.5); Tiberius II *ἔπεμψε μανδάτον, λέγων* (Theophanes, p. 249.26); cf. Corippus, *Laud. Just.* ii.333 (Justin II), 'haec plebi mandata dedit'; Malalas, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 175.27, *δηλώσας διὰ σιλεντιαρίου μανδάτα*; Malalas, p. 352, *ἔπεμψεν αὐτοῖς μανδάτα διὰ τοῦ πρωτοκούρσορος*, with which cf. Theophanes, p. 294.18, *πέμψας δὲ τὸν πρωτοκούρσορα αὐτοῦ ἡρώτα . . .*

⁴ *διὰ λιβελλησίων* (*De Caer.* 418.21), the proclamation of Anastasius; again at 429.13f., the proclamation of Justin I. Leo I made an address at his coronation *διὰ τοῦ λιβελλαρίου* (*Caer.* 411.22), where Vogt, *Comm. ad loc.* (ii.127) and Treitinger (*Oström. Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 9) assume an official called the *libellarius*. Yet there is no other evidence for such an official, whereas there is plenty for the application of the word to books or documents (cf. Souter, *Glossary of Late Latin*, s.v.); cf. especially *Caer.* 429.13f., where it is a *λιβελλάριον* (the proclamation) that the *libellenses* read. Surely we should assume the same in Leo's case; that is to say, he may have read the proclamation himself—though since he was crowned at the Hebdomon (outside the city) before his troops alone, this would prove nothing for hippodrome practice. When *De Caer.* 507.7 describes Theophilus as *δημηγορήσας ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ*, this presumably means that, exceptionally, he was not using a spokesman (cf. *De Caer.* 495.18, for the emperor greeting a deputation *ἀπὸ στόματος*, again with the implication of a personal address which was unusual).

⁵ Simocatta, viii.7.8.

⁶ For a parallel development, cf. the fact that by the fourth century (at least) the emperors no longer presented prizes to victorious performers in person; cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 44, 276.

(‘represented’ by the factions) became so powerful that the emperors were obliged, not only to listen to their petitions and protests, but even to grant them an actual juridical status. That is to say, it has been maintained that the people of Constantinople earned *legal* rights denied to their cringing, demoralized forerunners in Rome¹. We shall return to this topic in Ch. X; for the moment it will suffice to observe that, contrary to what the traditional view would seem to require, the early Byzantine emperors regularly treated circus protests with an arrogance and contempt that would have astonished and outraged a Roman crowd.

If we look at the dialogue between Justinian and the Greens without any preconceptions, we can hardly fail to be struck by his intolerant dismissal of their every complaint² (hardly a ‘negotiation’). Nor is there any reason to suppose this an untypical case. Very few records of actual circus petitions from fifth- to seventh-century Constantinople have come down to us—itsself a fact of some significance—but all those that have got similarly short shrift (pp. 285f.).

We are not here concerned with the question whether the later emperors *ought* to have acted differently, whether on social, moral, political, or purely practical grounds. But it is clear that they *could* have acted differently, at least to the extent of offering a justification or explanation of their refusal before sending in troops. It may be that by the fifth century such tactics had been deliberately abandoned as ineffective rather than simply disdained by the autocrats of the Byzantine world; that, given the unruly behaviour of the factions, an early display of force had proved itself the best policy. Yet the fact itself remains; for whatever reasons and with whatever justification, emperors no longer paid circus protests the respect and attention shown by their predecessors at Rome.

Thus far two normal and regular features of the relationship between emperor and people as manifested in the theatre and circus—features arising naturally from the fact that they regularly met face to face in such an atmosphere.

But before proceeding to the more violent popular disturbances of the early imperial circuses and theatres, demonstrations

¹ See pp. 288–9.

² Appendix C.

which go way beyond the limits of such permitted licences as formal petitions from the people and double entendres from the stage, let us consider why it is that the emperors not only tolerated but in effect positively encouraged such manifestations. It was not inevitable that they should have behaved thus. To say that it was a long-established tradition may be true; but it is hardly an explanation.

The emperors could, for example, simply have stopped attending the games. Or they could have removed themselves more decisively from such popular pressures by retiring to a Versailles (something of the sort did happen eventually, when court was moved to Ravenna early in the fifth century). But by the mere act of regularly and frequently attending the games, they automatically put themselves in a vulnerable position: either they granted the petitions they had encouraged by their very presence, or they solicited unpopularity by refusing.

Why then did they attend? Three basic reasons may be suggested:

(1) It is in the nature of things that our sources tend to record cases where an emperor was booed in the circus or theatre. *That* was news. In reality it was here more than anywhere that he normally expected to be *cheered*.

It was because the silence that greeted Caesar's entry into the theatre was exceptional that Cicero mentioned it in his letter of July 59. The normal reaction was for the audience to rise to its feet and applaud when popular heroes or (later) the emperor or some member of his family entered the games.¹ It will hardly be necessary to document the countless occasions when emperors (again following republican tradition) gave special games to celebrate victories and anniversaries; naturally they will have been able to count on particularly grateful demonstrations of loyalty on occasions such as these. From an early date there had been a tendency to localize marks of honour paid to prominent citizens in the theatre and circus. For example, a man awarded the *corona civica* might wear it in the circus, where he had a special seat.² Pompey, like Aemilius Paullus, was

¹ 'i nunc, tolle animos et tecum finge triumphos / stantiaque in plausum tota theatra iuvent', Propertius iii.18.17-18; 'in venerationem tui theatra ipsa consurgent', Pliny, *Pan.* 54.2; Horace, *Odes* i.20.3; Suet., *Aug.* 56.2; Lucan, vii.18 etc.

² S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (1972), 163.

allowed to wear the *toga picta*, normally restricted to triumphs, and a gold crown in the circus; a *toga praetexta* and laurel wreath at the theatre.¹ An ivory statue of Caesar was carried in the *pompa circensis*. From probably the time of Sulla distinguished men were allowed a *sella curulis* in the theatre; from the period of Caesar's dictatorship we find the even more obviously Greek practice of placing an empty chair in the theatre for a dead or absent hero.² The development of what has with some justification been called a regular 'imperial liturgy' of the circus will be discussed in Ch. IX.

At the theatre, plays might be deliberately written (or revived) for their relevance to imperial achievements and policies, just as in republican times Accius' *Brutus* (written about L. Brutus the regicide in honour of D. Brutus c. 138) was pointedly performed during Cicero's exile and seemingly intended for the *ludi Apollinares* of 44 by M. Brutus the tyrannicide.³ Pliny's account of Trajan's alleged reform of the theatre implies a considerable degree of propagandist exploitation under Domitian:⁴

Could any spot remain ignorant of the lamentable spirit of adulation in the country, when tribute to the emperors was paid in the form of shows and riotous entertainment . . . But the scandal was that everything was approved in the senate as well as on the stage, through consul and actor alike. You [namely Trajan] cut out all these stage performances from honours paid to you. Thus serious poetry and the everlasting glory of our historic past pay you tribute in place of a moment's disgraceful publicity; furthermore, the whole theatre audience will rise to show its respect with all the more unanimity now that the stage is to say less of you.

There is little direct evidence for what was evidently too normal to evoke comment,⁵ but in view of the many hostile double entendres from the stage quoted above, it will be appropriate to add one favourable example to redress the balance. Under Augustus once the people burst into applause at the line 'O

¹ Ibid., 271-2.

² Weinstock, 'The Image and Chair of Germanicus', *JRS* xlvi (1957), 146f., *passim* for honours of this sort.

³ Weinstock, *Divus Julius*, 146-7, with p. 159 above.

⁴ *Pan.* 54 (translated, as in subsequent quotations by Betty Radice).

⁵ Though cf. Phaedrus v.7.25f., 'tunc chorus ignotum modo reducto canticum / insonuit, cuius haec fuit sententia: / "lactare, incolumis Roma, salvo principe".'

dominum aequum et bonum',¹ much to his (professed) embarrassment.

Acts likely to be popular or designed to win favour or support could be given the maximum publicity if performed in the theatre or circus. Titus, for example, had informers arrested and paraded in the Colosseum, as later did Trajan.² It was of course an old-established Roman practice to throw criminals and prisoners to the beasts. Valentinian I went one better; he had the hated eunuch chamberlain Rhodanus burnt alive in the hippodrome of Constantinople³—not the last human bonfire to delight a Byzantine circus audience. In later times deposed emperors or usurpers were regularly mutilated in the hippodrome by their successors. It was here that an old emperor would parade his future heirs to ensure a smooth and popular succession; here that a new emperor would make his all-important first public appearance, in a carefully calculated pageant of promises and concessions. Victory celebrations, even imperial coronations, would take place in the hippodrome. At the other end of the scale, soldiers who had dishonoured the Roman name were made to parade there in female dress. There too that under the Iconoclasts monks were publicly humiliated, and on one occasion forced to marry nuns.⁴

Anastasius, in danger of losing his throne in a desperate riot, chanced all by appearing in the Kathisma without his diadem and threatening to abdicate. The crowd was shocked into silence, and he won the day.⁵ Anastasius was no stranger to such histrionics; not content with simply abolishing the detested chrysarguron tax in 498, he had all the relevant files burned in the hippodrome.⁶ So dramatic a touch was too good not to repeat; on his first appearance in the hippodrome in 565 Justin publicly repaid all debts incurred by his predecessor, and then burned the I.O.U.s in celebration.⁷ Constantine V brilliantly exploited the hippodrome in his campaign against the monks, whipping up popular rage against them by skilfully

¹ Suet., *Aug.* 53.1.

² Suet., *Titus* 8.5; Pliny, *Pan.* 34.

³ Malalas 339 Bonn, *Exc. de Virt. et Vit.* i.161, and garbled Suda quotations (cf. *CR* 1963, 264).

⁴ There is a good anthology of such happenings in Guiland, *BS* xxvii (1966) 302f. and xxviii (1967), 262f.

⁵ Bury, *Later Roman Empire* i.439.

⁶ Priscian, *Pan. Anast.* 162f.

⁷ Corippus. *Laud. Just.* ii.381f.

planted and presented *agents provocateurs*.¹ Much earlier, Titus had planted stooges in theatre audiences to clamour for the arrest of men he wanted out of the way.² And at a much more mundane level, we may without undue cynicism guess that when announcements were made there about the price and availability of corn and wine, the government would often have foreseen the request and carefully calculated how far they could go, so that the emperor could present what concessions were possible in the most favourable light.

It is of course a time-honoured device of the dictator to exploit his subjects' loyalty at mass celebrations—but normally on occasions of his own choosing. The difference—and danger—at Rome was that from time to time circumstances might evoke a less favourable reaction from the people. But this was no doubt sufficiently uncommon to make the price well worth while.

(2) Provided that it did not get out of hand (and in the early empire there were normally police provisions adequate to ensure that it did not), even a hostile demonstration could ease a difficult situation. A grievance aired, even if fruitlessly, is a grievance halved. Imagine the tension the first time Nero entered the theatre after the murder of Agrippina. A joke against him (like the one quoted above), if tolerated, could help to defuse indignation that, if suppressed, might have smouldered and grown to explode in a much more dangerous way. The emperor who allowed the people to get away with murder in the theatre was seldom troubled by real plots.³ It is at any rate suggestive that those who suppressed such verbal treason most harshly—Gaius and Domitian—eventually succumbed to the real thing. It was scarcely freedom of speech in the true sense, since it did not extend to the upper classes (who had to be much more careful what they said). But the people were not likely to mind if the heads of their betters rolled so long as they felt that they could say what they liked. An emperor's less popular ministers might have had more cause for anxiety; emperors

¹ Steph. Diac., *V. Steph. Iunioris*, PG c.1132f. See pp. 302–4.

² Suetonius, *Titus* 6.1.

³ Compare the saying attributed to Frederick the Great: 'My people and I have come to an understanding. They are to say what they like and I am to do what I like.'

were not above diverting the people's indignation with a scapegoat.¹ At a more modest level, circus and theatre complaints could provide an emperor with useful information, even if he was unable (or unwilling) to act upon it at the time. If he could show himself thick-skinned enough, a prudent emperor could derive the same sort of lessons from the theatre or circus as a modern politician does from the popular press or public opinion polls—favourable or unfavourable. This was exactly how Cicero had treated them.

The games themselves could serve as a safety valve. Genuine grievances (about a tax, a corn shortage, a minister) would tend to be dissipated in the excitement and resentments of the races. The great pantomime Pylades, reproached by Augustus for a quarrel with another dancer, is said to have replied: "You are ungrateful, sire; it is to your advantage that the people should devote their spare time to us."² It is difficult to believe that Pylades was telling Augustus (of all people) something he did not already know. Juvenal's famous aphorism about bread and circuses was of course bitterly ironic.³ Less attention has been paid to Fronto's fuller and entirely favourable statement of the same point, in a letter to L. Verus:⁴

The Emperor [sc. Trajan] did not neglect even actors and the other performers of the stage, the circus, or the amphitheatre, knowing as he did that the Roman people are held fast by two things above all, the corn-dole and the shows; that the success of a government depends on amusements as much as more serious things; neglect of serious matters entails the greater loss, neglect of amusements the greater discontent; food-largesse is a weaker incentive than shows; by largesses of food only the proletariat on the corn register are conciliated singly and individually, whereas by the shows the whole population is kept in good humour.

There can be little doubt that, not least among their functions, the games did indeed divert popular attention from what, for

¹ See below, p. 186.

² A combination of the slightly different versions in Dio liv.17.5 and Macrobius, *Sat.* ii.7.19 (with Marinone's note).

³ *Sat.* x.81. Not original (it seems) with Juvenal and Rome; according to Dio of Prusa, it was well known that the people of Alexandria cared for nothing but 'plenty of bread and a race-meeting' (*Or.* xxxii.31).

⁴ *Princ. Hist.* 17 (ii.217 Loeb ed.).

most, were the grim and tedious realities of everyday life in Rome.

(3) The ideology of the early Empire has attracted much attention of late. Yet of all the virtues (real and imaginary) credited at different times to different emperors,¹ perhaps the most important yet the least discussed is his *civilitas*.² It is a commonplace of imperial panegyric to contrast Rome, where a *princeps* governed free men, with Parthia, where a despot ruled over slaves. And nowhere did the emperor take more pains to appear first citizen among his fellows than at the games. If he could but master the popular touch, there he could be his own propaganda incarnate.

This great truth was early seen and exploited by Augustus, profiting from an error of Caesar. For Caesar, as Augustus himself (significantly enough) used to relate, was criticized for dealing with his correspondence while watching the games.³ Augustus was careful to do nothing but watch.

It is interesting to see that exactly the same reproach was levelled at another conscientious ruler, Marcus Aurelius.⁴ Both Marcus and Caesar recognized their duty to attend the games, but could not bring themselves to abandon all their other duties for days on end. For we must remember that festivals sometimes lasted for a week or more, and as early as Augustus 77 days a year were wholly given over to public games—a total that by the fourth century had risen to 177.⁵ No responsible ruler could afford (whatever his inclination) to give up this much time to public relations. Even Augustus would 'absent himself from a show for several hours, sometimes for several days' (whence it would appear that several days' attendance would have been considered desirable), but to avoid offence he always sent his apologies ('petita venia')—and a substitute too.⁶ Gaius also sent a deputy when unable to be present, often his uncle Claudius.⁷ Thus the principle was established that a representative of the imperial family should normally attend

¹ Syme, *Tacitus* ii (1958), 754 (an 'engaging topic').

² Only a page even in J. Béranger, *Recherches sur l'aspect idéologique du principat* (1953), 151, going no further than the texts quoted in *Thes. Ling. Lat.* s.v. *civilis, civilitas*. See now I. Lana, *Atti Acc. Sc. Torino* 1972, 465f.

³ Suetonius, *Aug.* 45.1.

⁴ *HA Marc.* 15.1.

⁵ Balsdon, *Life and Leisure*, p. 248.

⁶ Suet., *Aug.* 45.1.

⁷ Suet., *Claud.* 7.

at any rate the major festivals. Julian caused grave offence at Antioch (by then an imperial capital) when he openly flouted the conventions:¹

I hate horse-races as debtors the market-place. So I seldom attend, only during festivals of the gods, and I do not stay all day as my cousin [Constantius II, a stickler for protocol] used to do, and my uncle [count Julian] and my brother [Gallus Caesar]. Six races are all that I watch at most, and not even them with the air of one who loves the thing . . .

Emperors were normally praised rather than blamed for attending the theatre too,² despite its low moral tone, and those in need of popular support took care to be seen there.³ Theodosius I spent the day before he died at the circus.⁴ By the developed Byzantine period the emperor was clearly bound by the sternest etiquette to participate in all the important festivals.

But the terms on which the emperor attended changed somewhat between Augustus and Theodosius, as did the notion of *civilitas*. Augustus used to watch from what was called the *pulvinar*, an open couch big enough to take all his family.⁵ Gaius preferred to watch from the front row⁶ (hence the *pulvinar* was

¹ *Misopogon* 340A.

² e.g. *HA Alex. Sev.* xlv.7, notoriously a work of almost total fiction, but significant for our purpose in as much as it presents an idealized biography of the perfect emperor.

³ Dio lxxv.7.1 (Vitellius), lxxiv.14.1 (Didius Julianus), and for Arcadius' ambitious chamberlain Eutropius see Claudian, *In Eutrop.* ii.341f. and J. F. D'Alton, *Selections from St. John Chrysostom* (1940), 277.5, 278.16f.

⁴ Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* v.26.

⁵ Despite P. Mingazzini, 'Il "pulvinar ad circum"', *Bull. com.* lxxii (1946-8), 27-32, I still incline to see the *pulvinar* of Suet. *Aug.* 45 ('ipse circenses ex amicorum fere libertinorumque cenaculis spectabat, interdum ex pulvinari et quidem cum coniuge ac liberis sedens') and *Claud.* 4 ('spectare eum [sc. Claudius] circenses ex pulvinari non placet nobis [Augustus]; *expositus* enim in fronte prima spectaculorum *conspicietur*') as a circus seat of some sort. The 'pulvinar ad circum' of *Res Gestae* 19 (ναὸν πρὸς τῷ μεγ. ἵπποδρόμῳ in the Greek version) must indeed be an altar or the like, connected with *lectisternia*, for which many parallels can be cited. But how can the *pulvinar* of the two Suetonius passages quoted above be so understood—unless (as may well be the case) Augustus' seat was situated immediately by the altar? At all events, it seems clear that it was from here that members of Augustus' family normally watched.

⁶ Dio lix.7.4; Gaius did not give the signal to the charioteers himself (?from the *pulvinar*), but watched ἐκ προέδρας [read προεδρίας] with his sisters and fellow priests. A. Piganiol, *Byzantion* xi (1936), 384 was surely wrong to interpret 'il déserta la tribune officielle pour la loge des *praesidentes*', by which he means the box situated above the *carceres*. προεδρία refers to the seats of honour at the very front,

presumably further back than this). In the amphitheatre Nero sat in a box (*cubiculum*), and often watched through barely opened shutters, as did Domitian. Trajan did away with or at least did not use the *pulvinar*, a popular move according to an instructive passage of the younger Pliny:² 'Caesar as spectator shares the public seats as he does the spectacle. Thus your subjects will be able to look on you in their turn; they will be permitted to see not just the emperor's box, but their emperor himself, seated among his people.' If this was the ideal of *civilitas* under the Principate, things were to change drastically by the fourth century. We need only look at the four times repeated relief on the base to the obelisk of Theodosius (an official monument), where an impassive emperor gazes serenely down from his box, towering above the tiny spectators,³ to realize that we have exchanged a *princeps* sitting amongst his fellows for an autocrat favouring his subjects with the sacred presence.

The older tradition continued for longer in Rome than in the other, especially eastern capitals of the late empire.⁴ We have already seen how careful Constantius II and Theodosius were to act the *civilis princeps* during their Roman visits of 357 and 389, above all at the games.⁵ The poet Claudian reveals the consciously propagandist nature of imperial behaviour during these brief trips by his blatant portrayal of the same emperor in all the trappings of the Byzantine Basileus at his by then permanent western capital in Milan.⁶

In the East, *civilitas* was not a virtue that had been much associated with rulers. The word itself had no Greek equivalent. The historian Eutropius used it several times of emperors in his mid-fourth-century *Breviarium*; the almost contemporary Greek translation of Paeanius glosses the word *δημαγωγός*⁷—perhaps a cynical judgement of what *civilitas* really amounted to, more probably through simple ignorance that in the western tradition it was a standing imperial virtue. It is interesting to compare by a long-standing tradition reserved especially for priests (cf. LSJ s.v. or Pickard-Cambridge, *Dramatic Festivals of Athens*² (1968), 268f.); on Roman practice, see Alföldi, *Röm. Mitt.* 1935, 42.

¹ Suetonius, *Nero* 12.

² *Pan.* 51.4–5 (Radice).

³ *Porphyrius*, p. 11.

⁴ Straub, *Vom Herrscherideal in der Spätantike* (1959), 187f.

⁵ p. 166.

⁶ See my *Claudian*, 382f., and for the emperor at Milan add Ambrose, *Expos. in Ps.* cxviii.8.19.

⁷ *Eutrop.*, i.9.1; vii.21.2; 8.2; 8.4. Note however that, according to Dio (lix.3.1), Gaius was at first *δημοκρατικώτατος*.

with the passages from Pliny's panegyric on Trajan quoted above some passages from Dio of Prusa, addressing the same emperor on the same subject, kingship: Dio advises Trajan not 'to flatter the unprofitable and unarmed masses', or 'to covet the praise of the vulgar . . . but only that of the free-born and noble'; the emperor should not ignore petitions, of course, but his response to them is unmistakably described in terms appropriate to a god graciously granting his worshippers' prayers.¹ By the fourth century the supreme imperial virtue had become *philanthropia*, which was ultimately to merge with the even more paternalistic *eleemosyne*, charity. The emperor cared for his people, but as a shepherd looks after his flock rather than a *princeps* his fellow citizens. Byzantine emperors took their responsibility for the material welfare of their subjects far more seriously than their Roman predecessors; the poor, the old, and the sick were almost certainly better off in Byzantine times.² But such aid was both given and received, quite unashamedly, as alms.

Confrontations between emperor and people continued as before; indeed they came to assume an even greater importance in Byzantine times. But it was no longer either necessary or even appropriate to use the circus to exploit the *civilitas* of a ruler who owed his throne to God, not men. Professions of equality with the masses, even an unassuming manner (as Julian discovered),³ from a late Roman emperor would have astonished a crowd long accustomed to the ways of a *dominus*. Thus those who assume or argue that a less paternalistic relationship between emperor and people first developed in the late empire (the traditional view) can hardly be aware what a paradoxical and *prima facie* improbable claim they are making.

But there is one aspect of the emperor's *civilitas* which did endure from the Julio-Claudians to the house of Heraclius—and

¹ *Orat.* i.28, 33, 41 (*ἰκέσιος δὲ ὡς ἂν ἐπήκοός τε καὶ ἴλεως τοῖς δεομένοις*).

² G. Downey, 'Philanthropia in Religion and Statecraft in the Fourth Century after Christ', *Historia* iv (1955), 199f.; H. Hunger, *Prooimion; Elemente der byz. Kaiseridee in den Arengen der Urkunden* (Wien. Byz. Stud. i, 1968), 143f.; see too L. J. Daly, 'The Mandarin and the Barbarian', *Historia* xxi (1972), 351f. and D. J. Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare* (1968), a useful collection of material, but wholly ignoring the Roman roots, leaping straight from Isocrates and Saint Paul to Byzantium.

³ *Amm. Marc.* xxii.7.1 ('laudabant alii, quidam ut affectatum et vile carpebant').

perhaps even down to the Crusades. Byzantinists, cut off from a Roman perspective, have found it impossible to believe that an emperor could concern himself with anything so seemingly trivial as a circus colour for its own sake. Hence (as we have seen) they infer that such imperial partisanship, which are undeniable, must have some deeper significance. They are right, of course, to be dissatisfied with the eloquent simplicity of Rambaud:¹ 'Hélas, l'empereur byzantin était, lui aussi, un byzantin.' Many Byzantine emperors, like some of their Roman predecessors, may indeed have had a passion for the races (Michael III, Commodus, Nero); but this is not the only reason they declared their passion openly.

It was Augustus (as we have seen) who saw that the emperor must not only attend the games, but enjoy them as well. Yet how could he be seen to enjoy them in the same way as his fellow citizens if he did not directly share their partisanship? We do not happen to know which colour Augustus himself favoured but Gaius and Nero were ardent Greens.

If it was a duty that came easily to some emperors, this does not mean that they were unaware of what would now be called the public relations aspect of their behaviour. Nor was it always quite so easy or popular a thing as might have been imagined. Titus used to gesture and argue vigorously with the crowd about the merits of the 'Thracian' style of gladiature.² This was fine, just what ordinary citizens did. But when ordinary citizens got excited, as they usually did at the games, they were liable to turn to abuse, if not blows. Clearly the emperor must be careful not to behave too much like an ordinary citizen in this respect. And the moment he attempted (as was only too obviously in his power) to intervene unfairly in (say) a disputed decision, or to silence fans who booed his own favourite charioteer or gladiator, then he had undermined the whole principle of *civilitas*. Such, alas, were the ways of Gaius and Domitian. L. Verus, unlike his sober brother Marcus, favoured the Greens so scandalously that he was constantly abused by the Blues³—an undignified spectacle. Such genuine enthusiasm for the games could be a dangerous thing in an emperor. Caracalla was once so infuriated by jeers at his favourite charioteer that, outdoing all predecessors,

¹ *Revue des deux mondes* 1871, 764.

² Suetonius, *Dom.* 10.1.

³ *HA Verus* vi.2.

he set soldiers on the offending spectators: since 'it was impossible to find the culprits among so many . . . the soldiers arrested and destroyed anyone they came across indiscriminately'—doing little good to the reputation of Caracalla.¹ Arrian has preserved for us a little lecture by Epictetus on the topic.² A procurator of Epirus who had shown outrageous favours to a particular actor (?pantomime), complained to the philosopher of the abuse he had received from the crowd. 'Why, what harm', said Epictetus, 'have the people done? They have favoured an actor, which is just what you did.' 'Is this a proper manner, then, of expressing their favour?' 'Seeing you, their governor and the friend and vice-gerent of Caesar, express it thus, was it not to be expected that they would express it thus too? . . . For whom have the many to imitate but you, their superiors?' Cassiodorus offered similar advice to a prefect of Rome four centuries later.³

The emperor who would be truly *civilis* had to tread a discreet middle path. Contrary to what is often assumed, the only Byzantine emperor on record as showing *unfair* favours to his own colour is Justinian—and then only in the period before the Nika riot. The only emperor we know of who, for reasons of policy, deliberately withheld his favour from both Blues and Greens, could not risk appearing indifferent to the outcome of the races: *this* is why Anastasius supported the Reds.

Granted the existence of the tradition of personal appearance in the hippodrome and the various benefits to the emperor accruing therefrom, it is only natural that it should have continued so long as the emperors normally resided at Rome. But it might have seemed a likely casualty during the late-third-century anarchy. The emperors who succeeded each other with such indecent haste during this period may not have been the rough soldiers they are painted in the senatorial tradition, but they did have to spend most of their reigns battling with barbarians on the distant frontiers of the empire. Once things had settled down again under Diocletian and the tetrarchs, Rome found itself no longer *the* capital of its empire. New capitals sprang up wherever it happened to be convenient for the emperor of the day.

¹ Herodian iv.6.4-5.

² Epictetus, *Diss.* iii.4.1.

³ *Variae* vi.4.6 (of 511).

Yet in every one of these capitals so far excavated (six out of seven), a hippodrome was built adjoining the imperial palace, evidently in direct imitation of the *domus Augustana/circus maximus* complex at Rome. For Diocletian at Antioch; for Maximian at Milan; for Galerius at Thessalonica and (as lately revealed) Sirmium; for Constantine at Trier and Constantinople.¹ No remains have yet been found at the seventh, Nicomedia, but since we know that Diocletian built a circus there,² we may reasonably assume a similar set-up. Not to be outdone by his colleagues, even Maxentius, short-lived ruler of Rome, built himself a second palace/circus complex there, off the *via Appia*.³ A mid-fourth-century geographical treatise emanating from Syria, directly links the circuses at Antioch and Constantinople to the imperial presence there.⁴

We can hardly suppose that in each case the emperor in question was responding to local pressure for a suitable arena in which the people might present their petitions; still less that in each case the emperor was anxious to foster democratic sentiments on his own initiative. On the contrary it was not at all this aspect of the games, the one that has so impressed scholars today, that attracted the tetrarchs.

According to a no doubt oversimplified ancient tradition, it was Diocletian who transformed the Roman princeps into an oriental monarch. In fact, most of the 'oriental' elements in this transformation can be traced well back into the third century, but even so it can hardly be denied that the age of Diocletian marked a decisive and normative stage in the process of what German scholars have called the 'Absonderung' of the emperor, his elevation far above the level of ordinary mortals.⁵ The

¹ For full bibliography on all these sites see Michael Vickers' study of the Thessalonica complex in *JRS* 1972, 25f. For information about the newly discovered Sirmium complex I am indebted to John Humphrey.

² *Expos. Tot. Mundi* 49, and cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 73.

³ A. Frazer, 'The Iconography of the Emperor Maxentius' Buildings in Via Appia', *The Art Bulletin* xlvi (1966), 382f.

⁴ *Expos. Tot. Mundi*, 32 and 50. An anonymous Gallic panegyrist in the year 310 reckons Trier's 'circum maximum aetnulum, credo, Romano' among the 'opera regia' of the city (*Pan. Lat.* vii (6) 22.5).

⁵ See A. Alföldi, *Röm. Mitt.* 1934, 3f., and O. Treitinger, *Oström. Kaiser and Reichsidee* (1938), Ch. II. T. W. Africa, *J. Interdisc. Hist.* 1971, 20, takes the phrase 'voces populi non sunt audiendae' from an edict of Diocletian and Maximian (*Cod. Just.* ix.47.12) as an illustration of the growing despotism of the period. But the sequel, 'nec enim vocibus eorum credi oportet, quando aut obnoxium crimine

standardization of the palace/circus complex all over the empire is to be seen, I would suggest, as a concerted act of imperial policy; designed to foster, not (of course) democratic sentiments, but sentiments of loyalty and adoration towards the person of the emperor. In other words, what mattered to the tetrarchs was, no longer (3) above, the opportunity to display their *civilitas*; no longer even (2), the diversion of the people; but overwhelmingly (1), the glorification and consolidation of imperial power.

Scholars have sometimes remarked that the proximity of the palace to the circus provided the emperor with a quick getaway from the circus in the event of a riot. Such undignified exits were in fact exceedingly rare. The true reason was to make it quick and easy for the emperor to *enter* the circus, since he needed to go there so often. This uniform duplication of the circus/palace complex in every capital—often in areas where chariot-racing in the Roman style had till then been rare or non-existent¹—is a particularly striking proof of the function the circus had by then come to occupy in Rome itself: a backdrop against which the emperor could act out in due pomp his role as divine ruler, victor in war, and provider of peace, plenty, and games. So effective and popular a part of the emperor's public *persona* had this performance become that a circus was evidently felt to be as indispensable to the itinerant tetrarchs as a palace.

Even outside the Roman world, presidency of the circus games was recognized as the most conspicuous symbol of its master's power and glory. When the Gothic king Totila recaptured Rome in 550, one of his first acts was to preside at the circus.² The Frankish kings regularly watched at the circus in another former imperial capital, Arles,³ and Chilperich built circuses at Soissons and Paris.⁴ The Persian King Chosroes held a circus race at Apamea after he had captured it in 540, favour-

absolvi aut innocentem condemnari desideraverint' shows that the ruling is part of the developing legal distinction in punishment between *honestiores* and *humiliores* (see P. Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire*, 1970, 124-5). There is no necessary implication that 'voles populi' are to be disregarded in other matters; indeed (as we shall see below, p. 241), Constantine gave them a formal status.

¹ See below, pp. 201f.

² Procopius, *BG* iii (vii) 37.4.

³ *Ibid.*, 33.5.

⁴ Greg. Tur., *Hist. Franc.* v.17.

ing the Greens, since he had heard that Justinian favoured the Blues.¹ In 484 the Samaritan revolutionary leader Justasas captured Caesarea, and watched circus games there.² During another Samaritan revolt in 529, the self-styled Samaritan emperor, one Julian, again presided at circus games, this time in Neapolis.³ Against this background we can better appreciate the Jewish midrash quoted on an earlier page: how else could a Byzantine Jew imagine so great and splendid a king as Solomon except in a circus?⁴ We can also understand better why Constantius II was so appalled when his nephew and Caesar Gallus, whose loyalty he already suspected, visited Constantinople without warning or permission during Constantius' absence in 354 and gave games in the circus there. Rightly or wrongly, Constantius construed this usurpation of his own role as virtual public proof of treason, and within a matter of weeks he had Gallus removed from power and quietly executed.⁵

We come now to violent protests and riots. Our purpose is to compare the violence of the early Empire with that of the late Empire. But first a general point. This combination of frequent riots and a close relationship between ruler and ruled is by no means unique to ancient Rome.

The pattern has been brilliantly sketched by Eric Hobsbawm⁶ on evidence from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Southern Europe, cities like Naples, Palermo, Vienna, and (even then) Rome and Constantinople, capital cities with a long tradition of direct rule by a resident prince or duke.

'In such cities', writes Hobsbawm,⁷ 'the [people] lived in an odd relationship with its rulers, equally compounded of parasitism and riot'. It was the ruler's business to provide food and employment for his people. So long as he did this, he would receive their active and enthusiastic support. If he failed to provide, the people would simply riot until he did. Both sides knew

¹ Procopius, *BP* ii.11.32 (and cf. ii.14.1 on Chosroes' new Antioch).

² Malalas, p. 382.12, with Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii.31-2.

³ Malalas, p. 446, with Stein, 287-8. A Christian was unlucky enough to win the first race—and lose his head.

⁴ See p. 67.

⁵ *Amm. Marc.* xiv.11.12-13.

⁶ *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*³ (1973), ch. vii.

⁷ *Op. cit.* 115.

exactly how far they could go, and provided the ruler did not default too long or too seriously, the people would always return to their allegiance. It was in their interest to do so, since normally they took a positive pride in identifying with the greatness and splendour of their prince. And the prince could afford to tolerate what by modern standards might seem an alarming number of riots because they never threatened the system; at bottom the people were a thoroughly conservative force. So satisfactory a means of negotiation did this prove at Parma down into this century that the people found it very difficult to adjust to trade unions.

It will, I think, be obvious that early imperial Rome is a classic illustration of this pattern. Except that this curious 'symbiosis' between ruler and ruled was even more highly developed at Rome, thanks to their regular personal confrontations at the games. Despite the complication of religious divisions, even the Byzantine mob was normally devoted to its emperor. In fact (as we shall see), least of all were the factions of Constantinople his enemies, despite the frequency and violence of their rioting.

If we are to make any sort of valid comparison between the early and late Empire in this respect, we must be absolutely clear about the different character of our sources for the two periods. It cannot be emphasized enough that over 90 per cent of our information about actual circus and theatre riots in the late Empire comes from the chronicles, works with a very different scope from histories proper with their narrowly Thucydidean focus on political and military history. The chronicles devote a quite disproportionate amount of space to popular disturbances, often recording the exact itinerary of a rioting crowd, the buildings burnt, and sometimes even supplying the identity of the casualties. Grateful though we must be for such detail, we must not make too much of the absence of similar information for the early Empire. The austere Tacitus, for example, shows little interest in such phenomena, and while his disciple Ammianus does accord them some space, he does so with evident distaste and even an apology.¹ When Tacitus mentions a theatre riot, it is usually because it led to a debate in

¹ On Ammianus' account of popular disturbances in fourth-century Rome, see H. P. Kohns, *Versorgungskrisen und Hungerrevolten in spätantiken Rom* (1961).

the Senate or an imperial edict. The more relaxed and gossipy Dio, on the other hand, both mentions them more often and allows them more significance. Reference back to the footnotes of this chapter will show that, even for the first century A.D., most of the relevant material comes from Suetonius and Dio.

It is not till the period *c.* 190–230, thanks to the more biographical than historical approach of Herodian in addition to the eye-witness closing portions of Dio, that we can begin to construct a regular sequence of popular disturbances to match those of the fifth or sixth century. This was a troubled period, to be sure, but it might be rash to infer too substantial an absolute increase over (say) the half-century 1–50 A.D.

The commonest sort of factional disturbance in the late Empire (as we shall see) is the battle between partisans after (less often during) a particularly contentious race meeting or (more often) pantomime show. In the early Empire, despite lack of detail, it is clear from the evidence collected in the next chapter (pp. 223–4) that riots arising directly out of pantomime shows were very common indeed. In the first and second centuries, just as in the fifth and sixth, the standard response of the government was to close theatres and exile dancers. As early as the year after Augustus' death we hear of battles between fans and soldiers, with many deaths on both sides¹—a pattern that was to recur again and again over (at least) the next six centuries, at intervals which correspond, by and large, with the quality and coverage of our sources.

As for demonstrations rather than straightforward riots, that is to say genuine protests as distinct from mere hooliganism, there is an impressive series in the period between 190 and 238.

The first, in 190, culminated, as it was meant to, in the fall of the enormously wealthy praetorian prefect Cleander. Dio's precise account of the staging of this remarkable incident is worth quoting in full:²

It was a race day, and as the horses were about to contend for the seventh race, a crowd of children ran into the circus, led by a tall girl of grim appearance, who in view of what happened was subsequently reckoned to have been a goddess. The children chanted many terrible things in unison; then the people took up the cry, and

¹ Tacitus, *Ann.* i.54.3.

² lxxxii.13.

shouted out every imaginable insult. Finally they leapt from their seats and set off to find Commodus (who was then in the Quintilian suburb), calling out many blessings on him and curses on Cleander.

Commodus was sufficiently daunted to have Cleander beheaded on the spot. Hardly a spontaneous popular outburst, of course. Dio alleges that Papirius Dionysius, the prefect of the corn supply, had been deliberately exploiting the corn shortage to discredit Cleander, and in the *mêlée* Cleander's praetorians had to fight the urban cohorts, who should have been under the command of the city prefect, the future emperor Pertinax.¹ The children must have prepared their contribution, and presumably they waited till the racing was well under way so that the crowd would be excited enough to join in. Yet the fact that it was no doubt carefully rigged in no way detracts from the significance of the affair. It would be naïve to assume that the Blues and Greens of the late empire were never manipulated in this way; it was almost certainly senatorial agents who diverted the Nika revolt of 532 into the ruin of the city and praetorian prefects. And there are many similar examples of demands for the death or deposition of ministers in the early empire. According to Herodian, there had been theatre protests against Cleander for some time before the fateful circus demonstration.² There were popular demands for the removal of Elagabalus' prefect Eubulus for some time before his murder in 222.³ Similar protests about Tigellinus under Galba were referred to above; Tacitus records the final, successful demand for his head 'in the circus and theatres, where the mob can demonstrate with the greater impunity' under Otho.⁴ Dio reports jibes at Severus' prefect Plautianus.⁵ What is the difference between this sort of thing and the occasional clamour against city and praetorian prefects in the fifth and sixth centuries? On the contrary, the continuity of response on both sides is instructive—if predictable: it was always worth the people's while to demonstrate against bad or unpopular ministers, because there would usually come a time when the emperor was prepared to sacrifice the minister (who had outlived his usefulness) for a boost to his own popularity (note how careful the demonstrators of 190 were

¹ On the incident as a whole see Whittaker, *Historia* 1964, 348f., Cassola, *Par. del Pass.* 1965, 451f., and Birley, *Septimius Severus: the African Emperor* (1971), 128f.

² i.12.5.

³ Dio lxxix.21.1.

⁴ *Hist.* i.72.

⁵ lxxvi.2.2-3.

to punctuate their denunciation of Cleander with praise of Commodus).

In 193 first Commodus then Pertinax were murdered; but Didius Julianus was unable to hold on to the succession he had won in the famous 'auction' by the praetorians, not least (it can be argued) because he totally failed to win the people of Rome, who worshipped Pertinax. For example, on Commodus' death, the people, having got hold of the idea that the praetorians would not acknowledge Pertinax, ran to the barracks to force them. Pertinax was in fact the candidate of the praetorian prefect, but even so the body of the praetorians did not proclaim him till they had heard the people do so.¹ However representative or spontaneous this demonstration was, an incident in the circus as early as 186 shows that Pertinax was genuinely popular with the people (p. 197). The day after Pertinax's murder, the people insulted Julianus in front of the Senate house, rejected his offer of money, and refused to acknowledge him emperor. After being attacked by the praetorians,² 'they seized arms and rushed together into the circus, and there spent the night and the following day without food or drink, shouting and calling on the remainder of the soldiers, especially Pescennius Niger and his followers in Syria, to come to their aid.'³ Of course, it was the defection of the Senate and (above all) the praetorians on Severus' arrival that finished Julianus, but their attitude cannot but have been influenced by the attitude of the people. It certainly influenced Pescennius Niger, as Herodian tells us:³

When the people met together they called upon Niger continuously, insulting Julianus, who was present,⁴ and honouring Niger, who was absent, with the titles of emperor. On being given the news about the feeling of the Roman people and the shouting that was taking place continually at the meetings, Niger was understandably misled into supposing that he would have an easy success.

Before leaving Rome to deal with Niger, Severus took pains to conciliate, not only the Senate and soldiers, but also the people, by giving games and staging a lavish funeral for Pertinax.⁵

¹ Herodian ii.2.2-10.

² Dio lxxiv.13.3f.

³ ii.7.5-6; cf. Dio lxxiv-15.2.

⁴ Julianus did his best to win popularity by attending the theatre whenever possible (Dio lxxiv.14.1), but evidently with total lack of success.

⁵ Herodian ii.14.4 (games—if Stephanus' supplement is correct); Dio lxxv.4 (funeral).

Niger was defeated in 194, and if Severus had been prepared to honour his original compact with Clodius Albinus, governor of Britain, the civil war could have ended there and then. But by December 196 it became clear that he was determined to fight on:

We senators kept quiet [says Dio], but the people of Rome showed their feelings in no uncertain fashion. An enormous crowd had assembled to watch the last chariot races before the Saturnalia, in the Circus Maximus. When the six-chariot races were over, there was a demand for silence and then a sudden clapping of hands. There was a series of shouts, prayers for the welfare of the state. Then the people began to shout appeals to the goddess Roma, addressing her as 'Queen' and 'Immortal', and crying out: 'How long are we to endure such things?' 'And how long are we to go on waging war?'

'This demonstration greatly increased our apprehensions', added Dio, who was present at the spectacle and 'heard distinctly everything that was said'.¹ No question of a manipulated crowd here, any more than at the no less striking demonstration against the usurper Macrinus and his son in 217, again from the eye-witness description of Dio:²

The populace, finding it easy to escape detection at the races and feeling emboldened by their numbers, raised a great outcry at the horse-race on the birthday of Diadumenianus [14 September], uttering many laments and asserting that they alone of all mankind were without a leader and without an emperor; and they called upon Jupiter, declaring that he alone should be their leader . . . Nor would they pay any heed at first to either the equestrian or senatorial order who were . . . praising the emperor and the Caesar . . . and desiring the others too to agree with them . . . And so the populace henceforth regarded both Macrinus and Diadumenianus as absolutely non-existent, and already trampled upon them as if they were dead.

'This was one important reason', he added, 'why the soldiers despised him and paid no heed to what he did to win their favour'.

There was no shortage of such incidents two centuries earlier. The protests against the civil war of 196, for example, were as

¹ Dio lxxv.4.2-7 (quoted for brevity's sake in Birley's précis, *Septimius Severus*, p. 188).

² lxxviii.20.1-4.

nothing compared with the prolonged and violent demonstrations (including strikes) against the wars of the second triumvirate. According to Yavetz, the people's demands that an agreement be reached with Sextus Pompeius 'constituted a factor in influencing their leaders to sign the treaty of Misenum'.¹ Pompeius' immense popularity, in part though not entirely due to his control of the sea and so the corn-supply, and a terrible embarrassment to Octavian, was constantly manifested in the theatre and circus.² Indeed, when Octavian laid on games—tactlessly enough—in the theatre of Pompeius Magnus when the war was over, he was driven from the building by the curses of the people.³

Of course it would be wrong to suggest that it was only at the circus and theatre that such protests took place, in the early or the late Empire. In the early centuries it was not uncommon for the mob to lay siege to the Senate house in an attempt (usually successful) to coerce the Senate. At a trivial level, a popular demonstration in A.D. 14 virtually forced the Senate to vote a pay rise for a pantomime dancer.⁴ In 29, when Tiberius wrote to the Senate with vague accusations against the elder Agrippina and her son Nero, the people, loyal to the house of their hero Germanicus, thronged around the *curia* while the Senate debated, brandishing pictures of Agrippina and Nero, praising Tiberius, and denouncing the letter as a forgery!⁵ That day at least, no decisions were reached. On the death of Tiberius in 37 a mob burst into the *curia*, and forced the Senate to annul Tiberius' will and declare Gaius his sole heir.⁶ 200 years later, when the Senate proclaimed two of their number emperors in rebellion against Maximin, the people, armed with sticks and stones, demonstrated against the senatorial candidates and forced the proclamation of a third emperor of their own choosing.⁷

But in the third century, as in the first or indeed the sixth, it

¹ *Plebs and Princeps*, pp. 13, 25.

² Yavetz, p. 22.

³ Vell. Pat. ii.79.

⁴ Dio lvi.47.2.

⁵ Tacitus, *Ann.* v. 4.

⁶ Suet., *Cal.* 14, with Yavetz, p. 28. For other cases see Dio liv.1.1-3 for 22 B.C. (with Yavetz, p. 26); Tac., *Ann.* iii.14 for A.D. 20, and *Ann.* xiv.42 for 61 (with Yavetz, pp. 29-30).

⁷ Herodian vii.10.5-6. It is a pity that Syme's recent study of the incident (*Emperors and Biography* (1971), Ch. X) concentrates entirely on the uninteresting figures of the two senators.

was normally in the theatre or circus that such protests took place; partly because of the licence traditionally allowed at the games, partly because of the 'feeling of power' and 'absence of a sense of individual responsibility' encouraged at a mass gathering. Add to these three categories of Yavetz¹ the sheer excitement generated by the games themselves—something the football fan can perhaps appreciate more readily than the sober historian—and it is not difficult to see why.

It would be far beyond the scope of this chapter to assess either the significance or the success of such varied popular manifestations over so long a period. For one thing, we have almost no evidence as to how representative they were even of the population of Rome;² our sources tend to use loaded terms (*plebs sordida, imperita multitudo, vulgus credulum*)³ which tell us more about their own outlook than the composition of the body in question, and it would be naïve to imagine that bodies of people however constituted are never manipulated. Nor is it easy to judge what counts as success in such cases; a protest suppressed with blood may nevertheless make its point. Governments cannot always afford to lose face by admitting mistakes too promptly and openly. But even by the strictest criteria, many of the protests chronicled above were surely successful.⁴

We come at last to our central question. *Is there a significant difference between circus and theatre disturbances in the early and late Empire? And if so, wherein does it lie?*

One certainly gets an impression that the activities of the Blues and Greens of the sixth century were both more frequent and more violent than corresponding phenomena in the early centuries. But this is an impression hard to control, in part at least due to the nature of our sources. A collation of the extant chronicle tradition for the sixth and late fifth centuries suggests that we may have something approaching a complete list of the more important riots at Constantinople and Antioch during

¹ *Plebs and Princeps*, 19f.

² Whittaker (*Historia* 1964, 363f.) seems to me unnecessarily to exaggerate the role of senatorial pressure groups in popular demonstrations—and to underestimate the difficulty of rigging a convincing mass protest in a circus (see p. 237).

³ See the interesting appendix on 'semantic difficulties' in Yavetz, pp. 141f.

⁴ See F. Millar, *CR* 1963, 328, and *The Roman Empire and its Neighbours* (1967), 20-1.

this period,¹ whereas we have nothing remotely comparable for the early Empire. So for this and another reason to be presented in the following chapter (p. 222), it is not easy to assess relative frequency.

The question of the level of violence is no easier to handle. Almost certainly the conduct of the Blues and Greens was more violent; but then so was the reaction of the authorities. Constantinople, like all late Roman cities, lacked the relatively abundant police provisions of early imperial Rome. As a result crowds got out of control more quickly and were suppressed more violently.² And this level of violence, once attained, tended to be maintained as a matter of course. Modern study of the 'subculture' of violence has suggested that there is no necessary or obvious correlation between the degree of violence a rioter uses and the degree of provocation he has suffered. That is to say, there may be no significant reason for the high level of violence in late Roman riots; merely habit. Not that violent battles between the people and soldiers were unknown in the early Empire. Dio records how during the lifetime of the praetorian prefect Ulpian³

A great quarrel had arisen between the populace and the praetorians, from some small cause, with the result that they fought together for three days and many lost their lives on both sides. The soldiers, on getting the worst of it, directed their efforts to setting fire to buildings; and so the populace, fearing the whole city would be destroyed, reluctantly came to terms with them.

This reads like an entry from Malalas. Compare too the fierce fighting between the people and the praetorians in 238, shortly after the proclamation of Gordian III,⁴ or the extraordinary story of the mintworkers' revolt under Aurelian (270/1), when 7,000 are said to have died on the government side alone.⁵ The

¹ As suggested, not implausibly, by J. R. Martindale, 'Public Disorders' (1960), 28.

² See the fuller discussion of this point in *Porphyrius*, 237.

³ lxxx.2.3; Ulpian is now known to have died 5 years earlier than used to be supposed, viz. 223 (see Syme, *Emperors and Biography* (1971), 153).

⁴ Herodian vii.11, an incident incited by a senator possibly connected with the Gordians: see Whittaker, ii.234, n.1.

⁵ See the recent discussion by R. Turcan, 'Le délit des monétaires rébellés contre Aurélien', *Latomus* xxviii (1969), 948f.—though, like other students of the affair, Turcan does not take into account Malalas' account of a similar revolt of mintworkers, κρῆζοντες διὰ συνθηθείας τινός, at Antioch, apparently when Aurelian was there (p. 301 Bonn).

figure seems absurdly high, of course, but then what reason do we have for supposing that the figure of 3,000 killed in a Constantinople theatre riot of 501 is any more realistic? If 30,000 really did die in the Nika revolt, we may be sure that most of them were trampled to death in the press rather than cut down in direct fighting.

However, traditionalists do not rest their case on the frequency or violence of factional behaviour. It represents, they believe, something different in kind. In this they are surely mistaken. Every sort of factional disturbance we encounter in the fifth and sixth centuries (to leave on one side for the moment the anarchy of the last years of Phocas) can be abundantly paralleled in the first three centuries of the Empire. Indeed, as we shall see in Ch. X, it is the political demonstrations of the first three centuries that are hard to parallel in the fifth and sixth. Most factional disturbances of the late Empire were riots pure and simple. Where they did have more serious objects, they were seldom successful.

There *is* a difference none the less, but it lies in an altogether unsuspected quarter. The history of popular disturbances in the late Empire is in large measure the history of the Blues and Greens. The story of popular disturbances in the early Empire can be told without ever mentioning the Blues and Greens. It has not, I think, been noticed quite how sharp this distinction is. If it has been noticed at all, it has been put down to the assumption that the characteristic activities of the late Roman Blues and Greens were unknown in the early Empire. We have now seen that this was not so. Protest and riot had always been common in Roman circuses and theatres. Why then are these earlier protests and riots never attributed to the Blues and Greens, always to some vaguely evoked *plebs* or *vulgus*? And then, quite suddenly in the fifth century, it is Blues and Greens all the time. Why?

VIII. Circus Factions and Theatre Factions

SCHOLARS have been so busy with deep and debatable theories about what they call the 'rise' of the factions in the late Empire that they have entirely overlooked what is manifestly the most important single change in their character between the early and late Empire. Nor have they appreciated the significance of other, simple, measurable facts, which, when taken together with this change, point to a simpler and more reasonable explanation of their greater prominence in the early Byzantine period. These facts are as follows:

(A) In the early Empire, up to and including the fourth century, the factions (partisans and professionals alike) were solely concerned with the circus—that is to say with chariot-racing. By the late fifth century we find that both partisans and professionals of the theatre and amphitheatre too are regularly called by the names of the four circus colours.

(B) From the late fifth century on virtually every demonstration or riot in circus, theatre or amphitheatre is expressly or implicitly ascribed to the two major colours: Blues and Greens. Before that date not one such disturbance is ascribed to circus partisans; it is always just 'the people' as a whole or some vaguely defined pressure group or gang: never the Blues or Greens.

(C) It is from this same date again, the late fifth century, that we first begin to hear of regular and violent confrontations between Blues and Greens throughout the eastern cities.

(D) Before (once more) probably the late fifth century, Blues and Greens simply did not exist in the eastern cities, except for Alexandria and Constantinople.

(E) Nor is it surprising that circus partisans should not be recorded in the eastern cities before then, because (contrary to popular opinion) chariot-racing itself (in the Roman style) was virtually unknown in the East.

Taken by themselves, not one of these points (even B) might seem especially significant. When they are put together, the fourfold chronological coincidence begins to look something more than coincidence. Could it really be that what seems to be a fundamental change in the character and activity of the partisans does after all reflect something so commonplace (in origin at least) as a change in the organization of public entertainments? Let us first consider the individual points in more detail.

(A) *Circus colours in the theatre and amphitheatre*

The earliest evidence for the circus colours in the theatre is the presentation of dancers to all four colours at Constantinople in 490.¹ For the amphitheatre, the first evidence is Acacius, father of the future Empress Theodora and bearkeeper to the Greens, who must have died *c.* 500.²

Apparent evidence for an earlier connection turns out to be illusory. A curse tablet from Apeca in Syria concerning a Blue pantomime called Hyperechius was dated by its editor, Audollent, to the third century.³ But on grounds quite independent of the circus colour Robert long ago pointed out that the tablet cannot be earlier than the fourth century and might easily be later still.⁴

Then there is Malalas' notorious account of Domitian's exile of the poet Juvenal to Egypt for attacking the pantomime Paris.⁵ Despite the eloquent advocacy of Gilbert Highet,⁶ there is not a word of truth in the whole story.⁷ When Malalas says that

¹ Malalas, p. 386.

² Procopius, *Anecd.* ix.2, *θηριοκόμος τῶν ἐν κυνηγεσίῳ θηρίων μοίρας Πρασίνων, ὄνπερ ἄρκοτρόφον καλοῦσι* (so the MSS. and Haury/Wirth; *ἄρκοτρόφον* Alemannus, followed by Dewing—mistakenly, since the *tau* was normally omitted in popular speech; cf. LSJ s.v., and L. Robert, *Hellenica* v (1948), 87–9).

³ *Defix. Tab.* (1904), nos. 15 and 16 (where the pantomime is mistakenly taken for a chariotcer).

⁴ *Études épigraphiques et philologiques* (1938), 102; cf. Maricq, *Byzantion* xii (1952), 368, n.2 and p. 200, n.1 below.

⁵ p. 262.22f., reproduced in essentials by Suidas' entry *Ἰουβερνάλιος*, no doubt via the *Excerpta* of Constantine VII (cf. de Boor, *BZ* xxi (1912), 381f., xiii (1914/19), 1–127).

⁶ *Juvenal the Satirist* (1954), Ch. III.

⁷ The objections are arrayed by Michael Coffey, *Lustrum* viii (1963), 167–8, and K. H. Waters, 'Juvenal and the Reign of Trajan' *Antichthon* iv (1970), 71–2. I am not persuaded by P. Green's restatement of the case in *Juvenal: the Sixteen Satires*

Paris was 'dancer of the Greens', this is a typical example of his anachronistic guesswork. Knowing that Domitian favoured the Greens,¹ and living in an age when dancers were associated with circus colours, Malalas inferred that Paris was a Green dancer. All his 'information' about circus colours before the fifth century is of this nature.²

The case for supposing that the circus colours were definitely absent from the theatre and amphitheatre before the fifth century rests on much more than the argument from silence. We have a considerable body of information—largely epigraphic—bearing on the organization of theatre and amphitheatre entertainments in the early Empire. For gladiatorial and wild beast shows at Rome and in the West there are the studies of Friedlaender³ and Balsdon;⁴ in the eastern provinces L. Robert.⁵ For the various associations of actors and dancers Robert again⁶ and a recent paper by E. J. Jory.⁷ Not only is it the case that not one of the many hundred documents relating to the theatre and amphitheatre mentions the circus colours (whereas virtually all the few dozen circus documents do). We know quite enough about the theatre and amphitheatre to be able to say with some confidence that there is just not room for the circus colours, in either the organization of the entertainments or the loyalties of the partisans. Indeed, the introduction of circus colours into the theatre and amphitheatre superseded all the earlier categories and associations, among both professionals and partisans. By the fifth century the 'Artists of Dionysus', 'Parasites of Apollo', 'Lovers of Arms' and so forth are all

(1967), 18f., still less by the far-fetched theory of J. Gérard, 'Juvénal et les associations d'artistes grecs à Rome', *RÉL* xlvi (1970), 309–31. As for Malalas' version, Juvenal did not (as Malalas alleges) reproach Domitian for being a Green, nor did Domitian set Paris up in wealthy retirement at Antioch; he had him executed. There is evidently a confusion here with a later Paris, probably the Paris celebrated by Hadrian of Tyre who died at Antioch (Libanius, *Or.* lxiv.41), and perhaps also the Maximinus/Paris of Antioch beloved by L. Verus (*HA Verus* 8.7; cf. E. Wüst, *PW* xviii.4.1538 (No. 4) and J. Bayet, *Libyca* iii (1955), 115).

¹ p. 54. ² See p. 200. ³ *SG* ii¹⁰ (1922), 50f.; iv¹⁰ 205f.

⁴ *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome* (1969), 244f., esp. 288f.

⁵ *Les Gladiateurs dans l'orient grec* (1940), esp. Chs. III–V, with the supplements in *Hellenica* iii (1946), 112–50; v (1948), 77–99; vii (1949), 126–51; viii (1950), 39–72; and cf. xi/xii (1960), 220, n.4, *Bull. épigr.* 1972, no. 294.

⁶ 'Pantomimen in griechischen Orient', *Hermes* lxxv (1930), 160f. (= *Op. Min. Sel.* i (1969), 654f.), cf. *REG* lxxxix (1966), 756–9.

⁷ 'Associations of Actors in Rome', *Hermes* xcvi (1970), 224–53.

replaced by Blues, Greens, Whites, and Reds. In the early Empire the partisanship of the circus and amphitheatre had been quite different. The emperor Marcus was grateful that he had never been 'either Blue or Green, *parmularius* or *scutarius*'.¹ The humble oil-dealer Crescens was '*venetian(us) parmularius*',² the one when he was in the circus, the other for the amphitheatre.

The clearest material illustration of the changed situation comes from the abundant Blue and Green graffiti, none earlier than the fifth century, in Asian and Syrian cities that had no hippodrome. Of those where the inscriptions have been found *in situ*, most conspicuous is Aphrodisias, where acclamations to Blues and Greens have been found in both odeum and theatre. At the theatre in Miletus only Blue graffiti are still legible. In Alexandria (a city which of course had at least one hippodrome) a theatre has recently been excavated with a whole series of Blue and Green acclamations.³

It must be recognized that from the fifth century on a reference to Blues and Greens in a city need not imply that the city in question had a hippodrome.

(B) *Blues and Greens in politics under the Principate*

That the majority of urban riots in the eastern cities from the fifth century on were the work of the Blues and Greens needs no demonstration. It has not (I think) been noticed that they are *not* held responsible by contemporaries for so much as one riot or even a demonstration worthy of the name during the first four centuries of the Empire.

Whittaker's study of popular disturbances in the middle Empire finds four occasions on which 'the circus factions were involved'.⁴ Let us have a closer look at them.

The first dates from *c.* 186, when the future Emperor Pertinax was campaigning in Britain,⁵ long before he can have been seriously thought of as a successor to Commodus.⁶ A Green

¹ *Med.* i.5. ² *CIL* vi.9719 (*ILS* 7492).

³ All three sites still unpublished; see Appendix B, pp. 315-6.

⁴ *Historia* xiii (1964), 366.

⁵ Dio lxxiv.4.1-2 (that is, between 185 and 187: cf. A. R. Birley, *Epigr. Studien* iv (1967), 76-7).

⁶ This is not to deny the possibility that he was privy to the conspiracy of 193: see Birley again, *Bonner Jahrb.* clxix (1969), 250f.

horse called Pertinax won in the circus, and when the Green partisans cried 'It is Pertinax', the Blues, 'in disgust with Commodus and meaning the man rather than the horse,' cried back 'Would that it were'. An amusing story to recall after his accession—but scarcely a demonstration.

The second occasion is virtually a duplication of the first, only this time (in 192) there is no reference to the factions nor again a demonstration proper, since the acclamation of the horse is treated purely as an omen for Pertinax's future rule.¹

In 217 the Greens addressed a jackdaw as 'Martialis', the name (it was to transpire) of the man who had murdered Caracalla the previous day in Mesopotamia.² This quaint but apparently authentic incident (witnessed by Dio himself) can hardly be regarded as a demonstration either for Macrinus or against Caracalla, since no one in Rome could yet have heard of the assassination.

The last of Whittaker's examples is certainly a political demonstration (against Plautianus in 202), but there is no reference to the factions.³ Neither Dio nor Herodian attributes any significance to the fact (which both report) that Caracalla and Geta supported opposite sides in the games.⁴ Whittaker's claim that 'the partisans acted as bodyguards for the rival Emperors'⁵ again lacks foundation. All Dio says is that Geta was guarded by soldiers and 'gymnasts' (*γυμνασταί*).⁶ Properly this should mean 'teachers of athletics'; the context suggests a band of hired toughs rather than circus fans.

Whittaker has made the common error of simply assuming, on the basis of the Byzantine evidence, that the Blue and Green partisans would naturally be at the bottom of circus disturbances. In fact they are conspicuous by their absence from

¹ Dio lxxiv.4.3-4 (perhaps compare *HA Comm.* 15.6). The possibility (probability) that this second occurrence was rigged by Pertinax's supporters (cf. Birley, *Septimius Severus* (1971), 140) does not affect the fact that no *demonstration* took place.

² Dio lxxvii (lxxix).8.2; the games at which the event took place were held on Severus' *dies imperii* (celebrated on 9 April: *Feriale Dumanum* ii.3 (*Excavations at Dura-Europos: Final Report* v.1 (1959), 200). Caracalla was murdered at Carrhae on 8 April. A similar story is recorded by Ammianus; just before the usurper Silvanus was assassinated in Gaul in 355, the people in the circus at Rome cried out in a loud voice 'Silvanus devictus est' (xv.5.34).

³ Dio lxxvii.2.1.

⁴ Dio lxxvii.7.2; Herodian iv.4.1. In fact neither restricts the rival partisanships of the two emperors to the circus.

⁵ *Herodian* i (Loeb ed., 1969), p. 391, n.1.

⁶ lxxvii(lxxviii).2.2.

the many varied circus and theatre demonstrations of the early Empire—an absence that more than ever calls for an explanation now we have seen what a serious business popular demonstrations in the early Empire really were. And why should the change from non-involvement to near monopoly¹ be so sudden and complete when it comes, in the second half of the fifth century? The social and political explanations adduced hitherto will no longer suffice.

(C) *The growth of factional violence*

The question of the origin and 'escalation' of the urban violence of the late Empire will be discussed separately in a later chapter. Here I wish only to point out that, politics and demonstrations aside, rivalry between Blues and Greens, age-old as it was, did not as a matter of course take the form of regular pitched battles before the fifth century. Rivalry among partisans in the circus and (especially) theatres was lively and often violent in the early Empire, but even in this respect the spotlight never singles out the Blues and Greens as it was to do from the fifth century on.

(D) *Blues and Greens in the eastern cities*

It is naturally the turbulent Blues and Greens of Constantinople who have captured the attention of scholars. But according to Procopius and Malalas they existed in all the cities of the Empire²—a generalization that turns out to be better founded than one might have expected.

Over and above general references to their activity in Asia, Cilicia, Egypt, and Palestine, there is specific evidence for either Blues or Greens or both at the following sites:³ Alexandria, Antinoe, Aykelah, Heracleopolis, Menouf, and Oxyrhynchus in Egypt; Jerusalem, Caesarea, Berytus, Heliopolis, Apheca, Antioch, and Apamea in Syria and Palestine; Aphrodisias and Stratoniceia in Caria; and (illustrating John of Nikiu's remark that Heraclius, sailing to Constantinople from Carthage in 610, drew support from the Greens in 'the islands and the various stations on the sea coast')⁴ Crete (Gortyn) and Rhodes; Tarsus,

¹ Though see p. 290.

² Procopius *BP* i.24.2; *Anecd.* viii.1; Malalas 416.2f. (cf. Theophanes A.M. 6012) and 422.

³ See Appendix B (adding Tyre).

⁴ *Chronicle*, § 109.25, p. 176 Charles.

Miletus, Didyma, Priene, Ephesus, and Cyzicus. There are in addition some inscriptions from unidentifiable ancient sites in Syria and Phrygia, and two from Mainland Greece, one at Thessalonica and the other at Phthiotic Thebes.

Yet widespread and abundant though this evidence is, none of it antedates the fifth century—except at Constantinople and Alexandria, and even here there is nothing before the fourth century. This cannot be attributed either to chance or to the bias of the late chroniclers' interest in factional affairs, for most of the evidence comes from inscriptions and papyri.

Now we have papyri from Oxyrhynchus over the whole period of Roman rule in Egypt. Yet of the five papyri which name the factions of Oxyrhynchus, three date from the second half of the sixth century,¹ the other two from the seventh.² Dovetailing nicely with these is an inscribed pillar from the Blue club-house of Oxyrhynchus, firmly datable to the first decade of the seventh century.³ From Heracleopolis we have six papyri, none earlier than the sixth century.⁴

As for the inscriptions, every epigraphist knows how sharply the rich harvest of inscribed monuments from the prosperous Greek cities of the high Empire falls away by the end of the fifth century. Thus there is likely to be some statistical significance in the fact that we have inscriptions to the Blues and/or Greens from more than twenty different sites between the fifth and seventh centuries⁵—but not one from any eastern city in the first four centuries of the Empire. Take, for example, a well-documented site such as Ephesus, so rich in inscriptions of the early and middle Empire; its eight factional acclamations (evenly divided between Blues and Greens) all date from the seventh century.⁶ Or Didyma, where the *Corpus* signals only 20 out of 615 inscriptions as 'Byzantine'. Exactly a quarter of these 20 are factional acclamations, none of the earlier 595.⁷

There is the same sort of illusory evidence for their earlier occurrence in the East as for the earlier association of the colours

¹ *P. Oxy.* 145 (A.D. 552); 2480 (565/6); *PSI* 953 (567/8).

² *P. Oxy.* 152 (618); *P. London* 1028.

³ Quoted above, p. 148.

⁴ From the sixth century, *P. Stud. Pal.* viii.1179; all the rest seventh or eighth: *P. Stud. Pal.* viii.1180, 1087; *ibid.* x.197, 225; *Sammelbuch* 9154.

⁵ See appendix B.

⁶ Below, p. 315.

⁷ See p. 315.

with the theatre. Another misdated curse tablet,¹ and more anachronisms in Malalas. Nothing was more important to Malalas than to record the factional preference of an emperor if it could be known (or guessed). Unfortunately, where he can be checked from contemporary sources, before the fifth century he is more often wrong than right. He even gets Nero and Caracalla wrong, and calls Marcus a Green when we have it on Marcus' own authority that he was neither.² When he tells us of battles between Blues and Greens at Antioch under Gaius, the fact that he locates them in the theatre is enough to betray the anachronism.³ More serious is his account of Mariades, the man who betrayed Antioch to the Persians in 256 or 260.

According to Malalas' version (the latest of an uncertain and conflicting tradition), Mariades fled the city after embezzling funds destined for the purchase or maintenance of race-horses (*ἵππικά*).⁴ J. Gagé has suggested that Mariades was the 'boss' of one of the circus factions of Antioch, even then (he argues) politically active, and that it was this faction which betrayed the city. The factions, he further conjectured, were at this time divided between Greeks (the Blues) and Syrians (the Greens),⁵ the Syrians naturally being 'Persophile'. Mariades, then, would have been the leader of the Greens. In fact it is quite clear from the abundant evidence of the fourth century that even then factions of the Roman sort simply did not operate in Antioch. Chariot-racing there was a liturgy performed by curials.⁶ And since Malalas happens specifically to state that Mariades was a

¹ *SEG* vii.213, dated by Mouterde to the third century (*Mél. Univ. Beyrouth* xv (1930/1), 106f.) by analogy with Audollent, 15–16 from Apehca, on which see above, p. 194.

² pp. 257.21; 295.15; 282.12. It seems unlikely that he had any evidence for making Claudius a Green (246.10)—or for that matter Claudius II (298.21), Probus (302.6), or Carinus (304.10), though he might perhaps have had access to information on Galerius (312.10, a Blue). The only ones he definitely gets right are Caligula (244.15) and Domitian (262.22), both Greens.

³ p. 244.15f., accepted not only (e.g.) by Bratianu, *BZ* xxxviii (1937), 96–7 and Downey, *History of Antioch* (1961), 193f., but (by implication) even Browning, *JRS* xlii (1952), 18: 'That the Blues and Greens existed in Antioch as elsewhere from a much earlier period as an organisation providing chariots and drivers for the races is beyond question . . .'

⁴ p. 295.20f.; cf. Downey, *History of Antioch*, 254f.

⁵ 'Les Perses à Antioche et les courses de l'hippodrome au milieu du III^e siècle: à propos du "transfuge" syrien Mariadès', *Bulletin de la faculté des lettres de Strasbourg* xxxi (1953), at pp. 309f.

⁶ P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale* (1955), 124f.

curial,¹ it seems natural to infer that he was a private citizen performing his liturgy, not a *dominus factionis* on the Roman model (unknown—as we shall see—in eastern cities at this date). The theatre, not the circus, was the focus for popular demonstrations in Antioch at this period. Malalas glosses Mariades' circus liturgy with the words *εἰς οἶον δῆποτε μέρος ἐστρατήγησεν*, 'whichever faction he led', from which Gagé inferred that he had led both factions in turn. There is a simpler and more revealing explanation for this puzzling phrase. Faced with the allusion to Mariades' *ἱππικά* in his source, Malalas would dearly have loved to add a reference to the appropriate colour (as he had to the theatre riots under Gaius). But he had nothing to go on. So he just remarked, regretfully, 'whichever faction it was he led'—an *apology* for his ignorance on this vital point!

One other apparent witness to the contrary should perhaps be mentioned. The Midrash discussed in an earlier chapter² refers for its lore on the circus colours to three well-known Rabbis of the second and third centuries A.D.: R. Jose, R. Jochanan, and R. Zera. J. T. Milik has recently suggested that the tradition may derive from Herod's hippodrome at Jerusalem.³ In fact the quotations are almost certainly bogus, designed to create a false appearance of authority and erudition. A fresh study of the Midrash by E. Patlagean has proved beyond any reasonable doubt that it is a straightforward work of fiction, solely inspired by the Roman tradition in its developed Byzantine form.⁴ In all probability there was no hippodrome at Jerusalem under Herod in any case (p. 210); the earliest evidence for the colours there remains an inscription of the fifth or sixth century.⁵

(E) *Chariot-racing in the eastern provinces*

Those who have assumed that Blues and Greens existed in the eastern cities during the early Empire cannot have pondered the implications of that assumption. Since the colours were still restricted to the circus in at any rate the second and third centuries (the heyday of the Greek cities under Roman rule), the existence of Blues and Greens in those cities would mean that chariot-racing was organized there on the Roman pattern.

¹ *εἰς τῶν πολιτευομένων*, p. 295.20.

² See p. 67.

³ *Biblica* xlix (1961), 83; cf. Jarry, *Hérésies et factions* (1968), 96f.

⁴ *Revue des études juives* cxxi (iv ser. 1, 1962), 9.33.

⁵ See p. 316.

At Rome, chariot-racing was frequent enough to give rise at an early date to professional corporations (the *factiones*) which saved individual agonothetes the trouble of constantly assembling and reassembling teams and drivers for (already by the time of Augustus) 17 days in the year (66 by the fourth century).¹ The Roman circus charioteer usually began his career as a slave;² if manumitted, he was apparently at liberty to move from one faction to another, but it is clear that the normal thing was for both charioteers and horses (as well known to the fan as the charioteer)³ to remain in the service of just one faction.⁴ Thus despite the regular turnover of agonothetes and (less frequently) *domini factionum* and charioteers, there was always a certain continuity in the circus itself. As a consequence, from as far back as our evidence goes, the loyalty of the circus fan at Rome went in the first instance, not to the charioteer, but

¹ For the facts and figures about *ludi circenses*, Balsdon, *Life and Leisure*, p. 248.

² Thallus, for example, described in *ILS* 3532 as 'L. Avilli Plantae ser(vus)'; L. Avilius Galata (*ibid.* 5311), 'fact(ionis) russ(atae) lib(ertus)', looks like an ex-slave of the same Planta, now his freedman, as do his two fellow Reds Avilius Teres (*ibid.* 5287.13) and 'L. Avillius Dionysius, cond(itor) gr(egis) russatae' (*ibid.* 5295).

³ See *Porphyrius*, pp. 47–8.

⁴ It is often said that charioteers changed colours freely, but a closer study of the best-preserved careers suggests that this was only in the early stages. Diocles, for example (*ILS* 5287), though described as 'charioteer of the Reds', drove two years for the Whites and eight for the Greens before his first win for the Reds, with whom he seems to have remained thereafter. The same may have happened with Polynices, who won 17 victories for the Whites, 12 for the Blues 55 for the Greens, and then 655 for the Reds (*ILS* 5286); and Musclosus, with 3 for the Whites, 5 for the Greens, 2 for the Blues, and then 682 for the Reds (*ILS* 5281). Friedlaender (*SG* ii¹⁰26) quotes Scirtus (*ILS* 5283) as the only charioteer known to have spent all his career in the service of one colour (the Whites). It may be relevant to observe that in all that career he won only 7 first prizes, a wretched total. His 'loyalty' to the Whites may be due to an (understandable) absence of offers from the other colours. The career of Gutta who with 583 and 364 victories for the Blues and Greens respectively (*ILS* 5288) seems to have spent a long time with both at his peak, appears exceptional. Porphyrius' frequent changes of colour evidently caused a stir (*Porphyrius*, p. 165), and we know that his younger contemporary Uranius drove 20 years consecutively for the Blues before taking up again with the Greens, under whose auspices he had begun his career (*ibid.* pp. 141f.). Martindale conjectured ('Public Disorders in the Late Roman Empire', p. 71) that by the late Empire 'charioteers were permanent members of one faction and did not ride for more than one colour as happened in the early Empire'. This is not borne out by the evidence. It looks as if here also little had changed between the early and late Empire; the *successful* charioteer (like the successful footballer today) seems to have been equally free to change colours in both periods—if the offers were forthcoming and he himself was willing.

to the colour he drove for. The charioteer might change his allegiance, but the partisan (like the football fan today) would never do so. This pattern survived the take-over of factional finances by the Emperor, and at Constantinople as at Rome no charioteer, not even the great Porphyrius, ever had a personal following independent of his colour. This attitude, puzzling to the scholar perhaps, but understandable and familiar enough to the sports fan, is beautifully characterized in what Balsdon rightly calls one of the younger Pliny's stuffiest letters:¹

It amazes me that thousands and thousands of grown men should be like children, wanting to look at horses running and men standing on chariots over and over again. If it was the speed of the horses or the skill of the drivers that attracted them, there would be some sense in it—but in fact it is simply the colour. That is what they back and that is what fascinates them. Suppose half way through the race the drivers were to change their colours, then the supporters' backing will change too and in a second they will abandon the drivers and horses whose names they shout as they recognize them from afar. Such is the overpowering influence of a single worthless shirt.

Things were quite different in the Greek world. There chariot-racing was just one event in what were basically athletic festivals, from the original four—those of Olympia, Delphi, the Isthmus, and Nemea—to the many scores of imitations that sprang up all over mainland Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt during the Hellenistic and early imperial age.² Italy saw the 'Italica Romaea Sebasta Isolympia' of Naples in A.D. 2,³ followed in Rome itself by the shortlived Neroneia, the more successful Capitolia of Domitian, and several later foundations.⁴ These were all (of course) contests for amateurs, men of free birth and social standing, men (particularly in the chariot events) of

¹ *Epp.* ix.6, as translated by Balsdon (*Life and Leisure*, p. 320) with one or two improvements from Betty Radice (Loeb).

² There is no comprehensive study of these festivals; but countless details are elucidated in many works of Louis Robert, notably *Études épigraphiques et philologiques* (1938), many studies in his *Hellenica* (especially xi/xii, 1960) and *Opera Minora Selecta* i–iii (1969–70), and most recently 'Les Épigrammes satiriques de Lucillius sur les athlètes: parodie et réalités', in *L'Épigramme grecque* (Fondation Hardt xiv, 1969), 181–291. For a brief account, A. H. M. Jones, *The Greek City* (1940), Ch. XV.

³ R. M. Geer, *TAPA* lxvi (1935), 208f., I. Robert, *L'Ant. Class* xxxvii (1968), 406f.

⁴ L. Robert, 'Deux concours grecs à Rome', *CRAI* 1970, 6–27.

private means—a far cry from the slave-charioteers of the Roman circus. Indeed, in most cases (perhaps always) the owner did not even race in person—though it was always his name, not that of the driver he had employed, which was entered in the list of victors.¹

Yet modern works will state simply that chariot racing was 'equally popular' in both East and West.² Which sort, Greek or Roman? Is it in fact true of either sort?

A series of victors' lists from Corinth suggest that chariot-racing continued as a regular event at the Isthmia (now expanded to include another festival, the Caesarea) down to at least the late second century.³ But out of well over 200 Olympionikai known from the imperial age, only eight are charioteers—and we happen to be informed that chariot-racing at the Olympia was actually discontinued twice during the first century.⁴ Moreover, of those eight, five were Romans (three being members of the imperial family),⁵ and two out of the three Greeks were locals, citizens of Elis⁶—as had been every winner for a century before the Romans helped to re-establish the event.

It would be wrong to paint too black a picture. Even so small a place as Ambryssus (in Phocis) had a regular chariot event in its quinquennial games in the third century,⁷ and there is

¹ As emphasized by Robert, *BCH* 1935, 461-2 (= *Op. Min. Sel.* i (1969), 520-1). This is why women are so frequently listed as victors in the Olympic equestrian events, 'femmes fortunées qui entretenaient une écurie de course, et non viragos qui s'exhibaient dans l'arène'.

² e.g. H. A. Harris, *Greek Athletes and Athletics* (1964), 44.

³ B. D. Meritt, *Corinth* viii.1 (1931), no. 14.77f. (A.D. 3); no. 15.35f. (late 2nd century A.D.); no. 16 (181); and the best preserved so far (with bibliography) W. R. Biers and D. J. Geagan, 'A New List of Victors in the Caesarea at Isthmia', *Hesperia* xxxix (1970), at p. 81, lines 65f. (A.D. 127).

⁴ On the authority of Julius Africanus: see *Inscr. v. Olympia* (1906), nos. 220-1 (with notes); E. N. Gardiner, *Olympia: its History and Remains* (1925), 160; L. Moretti, *Olympionikai* (Mem. Lincei viii.8.2) 1957, p. 161.

⁵ The future Emperor Tiberius (c. 4 B.C.), his nephew Germanicus (A.D. 17) and Nero (A.D. 17): Moretti, *Olympionikai*, nos. 738, 750, 790-1. The others are Cn. Marcius (nos. 743 and 745) and L. Minicius Natalis (nos. 846), son of the homonymous consul of 106. A recently published inscription reveals Tiberius winning at Thespieae at about the same time: *SEG* xxii.385, with J. and L. Robert, *Bull. épigr.* 1959, no. 184 and C. P. Jones, *HSCP* lxxxiv (1968), 228.

⁶ Moretti, nos. 740, 868; cf. 672-5, 679, 693, 695-6, 697, 705 (all Eleans, often women—see above, n.1).

⁷ *IG* ix.1.12.

similar evidence from Thespieae and Larissa¹ (Thessaly was still famous for its horses).² But the pattern is usually the same: the victors are either Romans (amateurs barred from the Roman circus) or Greeks from the host or neighbouring cities. Competitors from the Asian cities are extremely rare. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that chariot events were regularly held in the otherwise flourishing festivals of Asia Minor. And in view of the many hundreds of inscriptions commemorating both festivals and athletes of every sort all over Asia Minor, the argument from silence must be held significant. As against the scores and scores of runners, wrestlers, boxers, and so forth who could lay claim to the proud title *periodonikes* (winner in all four of the major festivals), during the whole Roman period only one such champion charioteer is on record: T. Domitius Prometheus of Athens.³

Next in repute after the four ancient festivals came the Capitolia of Rome. All the most celebrated athletes in the Greek world competed there; yet the only victor known for the chariot event is a driver of the Blue faction from Rome.⁴ At an amateur level chariot-racing must have been beyond the pocket of all but the really wealthy.⁵ It is not surprising that so few were either willing or able to keep a mobile stable on the road as they went the rounds of all the big festivals, 'from the Capitolia to Antioch in Syria'.⁶

Greek popular entertainments did not remain entirely un-influenced by Rome. Gladiatorial games may perhaps be counted as the one real triumph of Romanization in the Greek cities.⁷ Despite the oft-repeated conviction of modern philhellenes

¹ *IG* ix.2.526f.; cf. too J. and L. Robert, *Bull. epigr.* 1964, no. 227; *SEG* iii.335 and xxii.385. ² Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.* 615.

³ Moretti, *Ischr. agon. greche*, no. 89. H. A. Harris's recent picture of Prometheus as a 'man who had bravely tried in the utterly professional world of horse-racing to keep the spirit of amateurism alive' (*Sport in Greece and Rome* (1972), 175) is somewhat over-sentimental. He might more realistically be seen as a millionaire pot-hunter who, by restricting himself to the Greek festivals, was unlikely to have encountered much serious opposition for the '60 crowns' he boasts of.

⁴ *ILS* 5288, cf. Friedlaender, *SG* iv¹⁰279.

⁵ J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families: 600-300 B.C.* (1971), xxv-vi.

⁶ *IGRR* iv.1636.

⁷ Inevitably one thinks of the way cricket was picked up in the British Dominions ---and soccer in Brazil.

that gladiators 'never really caught on' with the cultivated Greeks, the nearly 400 documents assembled by Louis Robert speak for themselves. As in the western cities, wild beast shows were often on the same programme.¹

The other major development of the period (a Greek one, though equally popular in the West) was the pantomime. The renown of its practitioners is well illustrated in the person of Tiberius Julius Apolaustus, honoured (not to mention other distinctions) by 23 statues in cities all over mainland Greece and Asia Minor.² It was even a subject of dispute among sophists (Aelius Aristides wrote an attack, Lucian a defence).³

Gladiatorial and wild beast shows were never part of the agonistic festivals. They were normally provided separately by priests of the imperial cult, at both provincial and municipal level.⁴ From early in the second century pantomimes did compete in the festivals,⁵ but theatrical shows (which normally meant the mime or pantomime) were also given separately. Like gladiators and beast shows, they were too popular to be limited to quinquennial festivals. Not surprisingly, it was often the same philanthropic or ambitious citizens who provided both. Thus we often find gladiatorial and beast shows mentioned on the same inscriptions as theatrical displays, *μονομαχίαι, κυνήγια καὶ θεωρίαι*, to use the standard formula. Chariot-racing, in this as in other contexts, is rare. A good illustration of the usual priorities is given by an inscription from Didyma recording the benefactions of a wealthy local couple: 10 days of theatrical shows, 12 of gladiators, and only then, after public banquets and the like, a bare mention of *ἵπποδρομίαι*.⁶ There is no mention of chariot-racing in a recent study of the festivals of Greco-Roman Ephesus.⁷ A list of the benefactions of sixteen successive priests of Ancyra under Tiberius shows only one chariot-race—part of an agonistic contest.⁸ The implication is that outside agonistic festivals (where it was rare enough) chariot-racing was scarcely to be seen at all in the cities of Asia

¹ Robert, *Les Gladiateurs*, Ch. V. ² Robert, *REG* lxxix (1966), 758.

³ M. Kokolakis, *Pantomimus* (p. 207, n.4 below), 9-10.

⁴ Robert, *Les Gladiateurs*, 271; W. Liebeschuetz, *Historia* viii (1959), 123.

⁵ Robert, *Hermes* 1930, 119-20. ⁶ *I. Didyma* 279a.16.

⁷ I. Ringwood Arnold, *AJA* 1972, 17-22.

⁸ Robert, *Les Gladiateurs*, no. 86 (pp. 135-7).

Minor. It is hard to see on what grounds scholars such as Gardiner¹ and Moretti² can attribute the decline there of chariot-racing Greek style to the vogue for *ludi circenses* in the Roman manner.

Our literary sources for the early imperial East barely mention chariot-racing. Plutarch, for example, on a number of occasions links the provision of theatrical and gladiatorial shows as ways ambitious men seek recognition and esteem for themselves—chariot-racing never.³ Compare Dio of Prusa's list: 'Yes, but does not the seeker after fame find it necessary to buy a lot of food and wine? And he must collect flute-players and mimes and harpists and jugglers and, more than that, pugilists and pancratiasts and wrestlers and all that tribe.'⁴ Again, no charioteers. Lucian has much to say about pantomimes, gladiators, and beast shows⁵ but nothing about charioteers, except to remark that the philosopher Nigrinus found the attention and adulation they received in Rome one of the many distasteful features of life in that city.⁶ Epictetus too refers to the folly of a circus fan at Rome.⁷ Men's dreams are often a good guide to the things that interest them most, and Artemidorus' *Dream-book* is an excellent guide to what men dreamed about in the Greek world of the second century. Athletes, pancratiasts, actors, dancers, gladiators were all obviously much in the minds of the people Artemidorus met.⁸ Even when asleep they could tell a *retiarius* from a *provocator* or *Thrax*.⁹ But not one of his clients ever dreamed of a charioteer.¹⁰ Astrological books

¹ *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* (1910), 466.

² *Iscr. agon. greche*, no. 263.

³ *Praec. ger. reip.* 802D, 821F, 822C, 823F; see C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (1971), 116.

⁴ *Or.* lxvi (49) 8.

⁵ See the references and discussion in M. Kokolakis, *Pantomimus and the Treatise περὶ ὀρχήσεως*, and *Gladiatorial Games and Animal-baiting in Lucian*, both Athens 1959 (reprinted from *Platon* x/xi, 1958/9).

⁶ *Nigrinus* 29.

⁷ *Diss.* I.xi.27; thus the reference to talk about gladiators, horses, and athletes at III.xvi.4 need not have the Greek world alone in mind (cf. too p. 213, n.3 below).

⁸ To give the merest selection of references: i.13, i.16, ii.49 (athletes); i.62, iv.42, v.45 (pancratiasts); i.76, iv.37, v.57 (theatre); i.32, i.35, ii.54, v.49 (gladiators, *venatores*).

⁹ i.32, with Robert, *Les Gladiateurs*, 16-17 on the terminology (cf. too R. Pack, *ΤΑΡΑ* lxxxviii (1957), 190 on ἀρβήλας).

¹⁰ The one or two dreams which do concern horses have nothing to do with the circus: e.g. iv.58; iv.46; iv.30; i.56.

tell the same story. F. Cumont collected into a fascinating chapter a host of allusions to athletes and entertainers of every sort in the astrologers.¹ Once more, barely a mention of the charioteer.

Such negative arguments could easily be multiplied. There is, for example, the complete absence of charioteers from the various flourishing athletic guilds of the early Empire;² or the almost complete absence of such telling signs as circus scenes, horses, and charioteers depicted on reliefs, mosaics, medallions, amulets, knife-handles, and so forth from the eastern provinces.³ Above all, hippodromes are virtually unknown in Roman Asia Minor.⁴

Modern generalizations about the popularity of chariot-racing in the Roman East during the early Empire always turn out (where supported at all) to be based on its unquestioned vogue at Alexandria and the list of eastern hippodromes in a curious treatise which in sixty-seven chapters optimistically purports to be an *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*.⁵

Now Alexandria may scarcely be taken as a typical Greek city, and the incredulous manner in which both Dio of Prusa⁶ and Philostratus⁷ comment on the hippomania of the Alexandrians strongly suggests that it was indeed not typical in this respect. It may be added that (as its name, Lageion,

¹ *L'Égypte des astrologues* (1937), 75f. (Cumont's curious theory that all these texts refer to Hellenistic Egypt was soon demolished by L. Robert, *Études Épigr. et phil.* (1938), 76f.).

² C. A. Forbes, 'Ancient Athletic Guilds', *CP* 1 (1955), 238f. (xystarchs were normally pancratiasts, see Forbes's list, p. 248).

³ For a good selection of such objects from the West see J. M. C. Toynbee, *PBSR* xvi (1948), 33. The only eastern sites to yield them are, significantly, the imperial capitals of the late Empire: Antioch (H. Seyrig, 'Amulettes et Sortilèges d'Antioche', *Berytus* ii (1935), 48-50) and Nicomedia (a racing quadriga relief of late imperial date—unpublished—shown to me by Dr. Nezih Fıratlı).

⁴ G. Forni's list in *Enc. arte antica* ii (1959), 654 is a useful starting-point, but very incomplete even on the literary side.

⁵ See now the edition with commentary by J. Rougé (*Sources chrétiennes* 124, 1966), §§ 32, 49, 50.

⁶ *Or.* xxxii.31, 40-6, 74-99 (note particularly the Homeric parody at 82f.). On the behaviour of the Alexandrian fans see now E. K. Borthwick, *CR* xxii (1972), 1-3.

⁷ *V. Apoll.*, v.26. It may be added that if C. P. Jones's Flavian dating of Dio's Alexandrian oration is correct (*Historia* xxii (1973), 302-9), then both Dio and Philostratus may well have had the same outbreak at Alexandria in mind, which might mean that their comments have a less general validity than is usually assumed.

indicates)¹ the hippodrome of Alexandria dates back to the early Ptolemies, long before Roman influence had reached Egypt.

Nor do the seven eastern hippodromes of the *Expositio* prove much about the popularity of chariot-racing in the *early* imperial east. In the first place, at least five and probably six were late gifts from Roman emperors; three date from the third century, three more from the fourth, and the last (Berytus, where we have no evidence before the *Expositio*)² is probably no earlier. Secondly, it is by no means a random selection; it contains virtually all the hippodromes in use at the time. Very few additions can be made.

In mainland Greece and Asia Minor only two are mentioned: those at Constantinople and Nicomedia. The former was apparently begun by Severus but completed by Constantine,³ designed, like the one at Nicomedia,⁴ to complement an imperial palace, built to adorn a capital rather than in answer to local demand. The only additions to be made in this area are at Nicopolis in Epirus (below) and Thessalonica,⁵ the latter as part of another imperial palace complex.

The other hippodromes in the *Expositio* are all in Syria and Palestine: Antioch, Laodicea, Berytus, Tyre, and Caesarea. Even granting some kernel of truth to Malalas' improbable story that a Roman proconsul built a hippodrome at Antioch in 67 B.C.,⁶ the extant remains are perhaps fourth-century;⁷ if so, (once more) part of a tetrarchic palace complex. Those at Laodicea and (probably) Tyre were gifts in return for loyalty in the civil war of the 190s by Septimius Severus.⁸ The one at

¹ Maricq's study of the Alexandrian hippodromes in *Rev. Archéol.* 1951, 26-46 entirely supersedes Calderini's entries in *Diz. dei nomi geogr. e topogr. dell'Egitto greco-romano* i.1 (1935), 116f., 124f., 146f.; see too now Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* ii (1972), 100-1.

² See R. Mouterde, *Mél. Univ. Beyrouth* 1930/31, 122-3, with p. 200, n.1 above and the inscription published in *Porphyrius*, p. 82.

³ For the details of who built what, see R. Guiland, 'Les Hippodromes de Byzance: l'hippodrome de Sévère et l'hippodrome de Constantin le Grand', *BS* xxxi (1970), 182f.

⁴ Iactantius, *de mort. persec.* xvii.4; and cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 73.

⁵ Excellently studied by M. Vickers in *JRS* 1972, 25f.

⁶ Malalas, p. 225, with G. Downey, *TAPA* 1951, 152f., and *History of Antioch* (1961) 140-1.

⁷ No earlier than the second century and quite possibly as late as the fourth, according to J. Humphrey (p. 210, n.1), pp. 39, 45.

⁸ The hippodrome of Tyre has only recently been excavated; no fuller publication

Caesarea, hitherto taken to be of the first century (and attributed to Herod) is probably also third-century,¹ perhaps again Severan.

On the face of it there were several other hippodromes in this area. But those at Apamea and Neapolis are not attested before the sixth century,² and I for one find it hard to credit the local tradition (not earlier than Procopius) that the hippodrome of Edessa was built by Augustus.³ On the other hand the Hellenistic hippodrome at Seleuceia Pieria⁴ almost certainly fell out of use when that city was eclipsed by Antioch. As for the group of Palestinian hippodromes mentioned by Josephus (at Jerusalem, Tiberias, Tarichaeae, and Jericho),⁵ it must seriously be doubted whether all or any were true hippodromes at all (the one at Jericho is styled 'the so-called hippodrome'),⁶ especially now that the Caesarean hippodrome can no longer be attributed to Herod as a parallel. Perhaps rather parks or riding grounds, a sense for *hippodromus* familiar from the younger Pliny and elsewhere.⁷ That leaves us with Gerasa in the Decapolis,⁸ Bostra in the Hauran,⁹ and, moving around the mediterranean coast towards North Africa, where chariot-racing was certainly popular, Cyrene.¹⁰

It would seem then that there is very little evidence for chariot-racing in eastern cities before the third century. Even then, there is nothing to suggest that the racing that took place yet than *Illustrated London News* for 27 June 1970, pp. 23-5. The late Donald Strong thought a third-century date probable and the connection with Severus is an obvious guess in view of his similar treatment of Laodicea.

¹ Once again the verdict of John Humphrey; see his preliminary publication, 'Prolegomena to the Study of the Hippodrome at Caesarea Maritima', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 213 (Feb. 1974), 2-45.

² Procopius, *BP* ii.11.31f.; Malalas, p. 446.

³ Procopius, *BP* ii.12.18-19.

⁴ Polybius v.59.1.

⁵ Josephus, *BJ* ii.44, *AJ* xvii.255; *Vita* 27; *BJ* ii.599; *BJ* i.659 (cf. 666), *AJ* xvii.174.

⁶ Maricq, *Rev. Archeol.* 1951, 36

⁷ e.g. *Epp.* v.6.32, with Sherwin-White ad loc., and Maricq, loc. cit.; cf. P. Grimal, *les Jardins romains* (1947), 267, and add the example in Olympiodorus, fr. 43, with J. Rougé, *REA* 1961, 66, n.2.

⁸ E. B. Müller and G. Horsfield in *Gerasa: City of the Decapolis*, ed. C. H. Kraeling (1938), 85f.

⁹ H. C. Butler in *Princeton Expedition to Syria* iia (1919), 275f.

¹⁰ Vickers, *JRS* 1972, 28, n.27. I am leaving out of count the numerous stadia (i.e. running tracks) which have been called hippodromes from time to time but are clearly much too small to have served this purpose (e.g. at Anazarbus, Cyzicus, Perge).

in such hippodromes as there were was in the Roman rather than the Greek style. A probably third-century agonistic inscription from Gerasa records *hippotrophoi* among the victors.¹ 'The occurrence of *ἵπποτρόφοι* is interesting as a proof of chariot racing', wrote A. H. M. Jones when publishing the text.² True, but (as Robert saw)³ the fact that it is the owner not the jockey who is counted as the victor proves that it was racing in the Greek, not Roman style. Remains of a hippodrome of Roman date have been found at Nicopolis,⁴ which it is natural to connect with the Aktia established by Augustus when he founded the city. The festival, like the city, was entirely Greek.⁵ We have seen already that, so far from introducing their own circus games into the Greek cities, Romans often helped to re-establish (or keep going) the equestrian events in the Greek festivals. There is no reason to suppose that the other hippodromes Roman emperors built in the East were intended for any but Greek games. In particular, the reign of Severus saw a marked increase in the number of Greek festivals founded in the eastern cities,⁶ and it is natural to assume that the hippodromes of Laodicea and Tyre fit into this context.

It is perhaps against this context that we should read a curious chapter of Dio Cassius. In the second part of the famous speech attributed to Maecenas in Book lii, universally recognized as a political pamphlet relating to conditions in the early third century and probably written soon after the death of Severus,⁷ Dio makes a series of proposals about the cities; no popular assemblies, less public building; and while some festivals were to be permitted (30-2), no horse-racing, at least no horse-racing 'as with us' (i.e. at Rome). No city but Rome was to be allowed horse-races 'held separately from gymnastic contests', so as to prevent 'wanton dissipation of vast sums of money, and to keep

¹ *SEG* vii.900 = *Gerasa*, ed. Kraeling (1938), incr. no. 194.

² *JRS* xviii (1928), 174.

³ *Mél. syriens* . . . *R. Dussaud* (1939), 733-4 (= *Op. Min. Sel.* i (1969), 605-6).

⁴ A. Baccin/V. Ziino, *Palladio* iv (1940), 15.

⁵ G. W. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* (1965), 94.

⁶ Most are listed by Hartmann in *PW* ii.A.1.961-4, to which add Robert, *CRAI* 1970, 23-4, and Barnes, *JTS* xx (1969) 125-8 on the 'Pythicus agon' of Carthage. For Severus' philhellenism, see Barnes, *Tertullian* (1971), 188-9.

⁷ F. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (1964), 102-18; even if Millar's date of 214 for lii is not to be pressed (cf. Bowersock, *Gnomon* 1965, 472), there are certainly no good grounds for putting it as late as Severus Alexander, as formerly fashionable.

the populace from becoming deplorably crazed over such a sport and, above all, to give those who are serving in the army an abundant supply of the best horses' (30.7). Presumably Dio is thinking more of western than eastern cities here (particularly in Spain and Africa, where chariot-racing was widespread), but if his anxieties did embrace eastern cities as well, it was surely because of the rash of hippodromes so very recently built by Severus; certainly at Byzantium and Laodicea, probably at Tyre and perhaps Caesarea too. It is interesting to see that, apart from its bad effect on public morals and the cavalry, it is above all the expense that worries Dio; he speaks as a member of the class that would be faced with the bill.

The one place where we might have expected to find *ludi circenses* in the East is in the Roman colonies, particularly those founded predominantly with Italian emigrants, such as the cluster in Southern Asia Minor recently studied by Barbara Levick. Yet even here there is no trace. Apart from gladiators and *venationes* we find only athletic festivals, complete with gymnasiarchs, xystarchs, and all the rest.¹ We may contrast the prevalence of *ludi circenses* (often linked with *ludi scaenici*, thus underlining the direct Roman influence) in the colonies and *municipia* of the West. In the small province of Hispania Baetica, for instance, there are no fewer than ten places—often quite tiny—where *circenses* are expressly attested, not to mention three more with a circus.² Where there was no existing tradition of public spectacles, the Roman games soon established themselves. Lacking as it did the arresting novelty of gladiators, chariot-racing made no headway in the East as a sport in its own right till the fall of the gymnasium.

Lest anyone see any significance in the fact that the *Expositio* always uses the technical Latin term *circenses* for both chariot-racing and circus buildings, it should be pointed out that what we have is only a fifth- or sixth-century Latin translation of a

¹ B. Levick, *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* (1967), 83. Her remark 'There is no need to assume that the Greek games ever replaced the Roman shows' is misleading, since gladiators and beast shows were just as popular in Asian cities with no Roman colonists. More significant is the absence of the more specifically western circus games. For some other objections to Levick's exaggerated emphasis on the continuing Roman character of Pisidian Antioch see E. L. Bowie, *JRS* lx (1970), 206.

² See the list in G. Forni, *Enc. arte antica* ii (1959), 652f.

mid-fourth-century Greek original.¹ We may compare Eustathius' Latin version of Basil's *Hexaemeron*,² where 'nonnulli autem *circensium* furiali ardore detenti' might well seem to imply regular *circenses*. But the original has only *τινες τῶν ἵππομαχούντων*. The term *κιρκήσια* appears only once in the Greek world, on an inscription from Daphne of uncertain date, which its editors refer to the equestrian events of the Antiochene Olympia.³ If so, the word would be used rather loosely (Latin *circenses* had a quite different scope from Greek equestrian games), and the reference might be to the more Roman style racing which we meet at Antioch after it had become an imperial capital late in the third century. The author of the *Expositio* explicitly links the *circenses* of fourth-century Antioch with the fact that 'the Emperor resides there'.⁴

We have already surveyed the converging testimony of inscriptions and papyri for the late arrival of Blues and Greens in Oxyrhynchus. Four other papyri can now help to fill in the picture, illustrating the change that came with the early Byzantine period.

First, a newly published circus programme from Oxyrhynchus (the first such to be found anywhere in the Roman world), which promises six races, punctuated by a series of 'turns'—dogs, gazelles, mimes, singing rope-dancers, and (blushing, no doubt, in such company) a troupe of athletes.⁵ *μίσσοσ*, a unique transliteration of the Latin *missus*,⁶ and the *πόμπη* (*πομπή*)

¹ See A. Klotz, *Philologus* lxx (1906), 97f. (summary in Rougé, pp. 94-8). The anomalous use of *circenses* = circus (32, 49, 55, 64) is only paralleled by another late Latin translation, of Theodore Mops., *In Philem.* ii.271. As Klotz saw (pp. 122-3), at § 55, 'circenses bene positum et aeramento multo ornatum', *ἵπποδρομον* has been translated *circenses* and its epithets carelessly left singular as in the original.

² Basil, *Hex.* 4.1. (ed. Giet² 1968, p. 244); cf. Eustathius, *PG* xxx.904-5.

³ *JGLS* iii.965; I am not counting Epictetus, *Diss.* iv.10.20, where the reference is to consular games in Rome.

⁴ 'quoniam ibi imperator sedet', § 32, with a similar remark on Constantinople at § 50.

⁵ *P. Oxy.* 2707, with commentary by J. Rea (see frontispiece). The athletes are not (as Rea suggests) evidence for the continuation of athletic contests, but a modest troupe of professionals.

⁶ The normal Greek term for race (standard in Byzantine texts) is *βάϊον* or *βᾶϊν* (a palm-leaf: see LSJ s.v.), perhaps of semitic origin (see the ancient etymologies quoted in Ducange, *Gloss. Med. et Infim. Graec.* s.v.).

circensis) that opens the proceedings, underline the entirely Roman character of the spectacle.¹

The other three documents are as yet unpublished.² The first, a work contract, shows a charioteer, a citizen of Hermopolis, undertaking to drive the team of an Oxyrhynchite gymnasiarch in the 'sacred Capitoline games' founded at Oxyrhynchus in 273/4. The second is a petition from an Oxyrhynchite charioteer for tax immunities in respect of a victory in the *biga* won at the 'sacred, eiselastic, world-wide, Philadelphian, Capitoline games' of Antinoopolis two years later. The third is a rather similar document, notifying the municipal authorities of Oxyrhynchus that a certain Stephanus has won in the 'Dacian' chariot at what is probably an earlier occurrence of the same festival at Antinoopolis, in 272. Another example in the Greek tradition is the Isthmian victory won late in the second century by a team entered as 'the city of the Antinoites'.³ Here we may contrast the evidently professional charioteers dressed in the Roman circus colours of a probably fifth-century painted papyrus from Antinoopolis.⁴

It is surely no coincidence that it is not till after the amateur chariotcer, the sacred festivals, and the gymnasiarchs had gone that we find Blues and Greens at Oxyrhynchus, as indeed anywhere in the eastern provinces. It is significant that the earliest papyrus to mention a circus colour does so in connection with its *factionarius*,⁵ another term from the world of *ludi circenses* till then unknown in the East.

The reorganization of public entertainments

We may now return to our cluster of coincidences. Why is it that it is not till some time in the fifth century that we first find (a) Blues and Greens in theatres and amphitheatres; (b) Blues and Greens in the eastern cities at all; (c) Blues and Greens as the source of most public disturbances?

Exponents of the traditional view have taken it for granted

¹ For the 'Victories', presumably statuettes carried in the *pompa*, see *Porphyrius*, p. 250.

² The first two (kindly shown to me by John Rea) are to be published as *P. Oxy.* xliii.3135 and 3116; the third I owe to the kindness of David Thomas.

³ B. D. Meritt, *Corinth* viii.1 (1931), p. 20, no. 15.

⁴ *JEA* xvii (1931), p. 1 and Pl. 1. See now Turner, *JHS* 1973, 192-5.

⁵ *P. Cair. Isid.* 57 and 58 (see p. 9 above).

that as they grew in power the factions 'took over' the theatres and amphitheatres.¹ But 'factions' in what sense? Not the professionals, who simply did what their employers told them. And not the partisans either, who (whatever else they might do) had no say in the organization, still less the financing of the spectacles they supported.²

Natural evolution can be ruled out too, for the innovation appears more or less simultaneously in both East and West: at Apamea in Syria³ no less than in Constantinople and Rome.⁴

Whatever the wider causes and consequences of the behaviour of the Blues and Greens in the cities of the early Byzantine East, we must at the very least presume some major change in the character and organization of public entertainments, which (for whatever reason in the first instance) made possible the introduction of Blues and Greens into these unaccustomed arenas.

Just such changes did take place, though they have not hitherto been related to the 'rise' of the Blues and Greens. Before attempting to do this, we must first consider the changes themselves.

Early in the fourth century came what, but for the (at first sight surprising) silence of contemporaries, might have seemed a profound change in the entire life style of the Greek city: the disappearance of the gymnasium. It has also evoked surprisingly little in the way of comment or explanation from modern historians of Greek culture and institutions. 'It cannot be chance', writes one scholar, 'that the evidence for the gymnasia and their officials fades out just in the years when the civic estates and taxes were finally confiscated.'⁵ Or from another: 'the collapse of the gymnasia (the focal points of Hellenism) under the pressure of Christianity more than any other single event brought in the Middle Ages.'⁶ But it would be wrong to imply that it was from financial starvation alone that Greek athletics died, nor is there much to suggest that Christianity had any direct influence on its decline. Whatever some extremists might intone, most Christians of the early centuries were

¹ F. Dvornik, *BM* 1946, 123.

² See p. 19.

³ *ACO* iii.96.17f.

⁴ Cassiodorus, *Var.* i.20; Greg. Naz., *PG* xxxvi. 301, 304.

⁵ W. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration* (1971), 156.

⁶ E. G. Turner, *Greek Papyri* (1968), 84.

thoroughly imbued with the athletic ideal, as illustrated by the athletic imagery so common in their writings (notably Saint Paul¹ and John Chrysostom²). Particularly striking is the Christian appropriation of the term *askesis* (properly the training of the athlete), and the metaphor by which the martyr or holy man could without any feeling of inappropriateness be called (almost as a technical term) the 'athlete of Christ'. In truth, the gymnasium died a natural death, un lamented even by the few remaining Hellenes of the day.³

By the Roman period athletics had become, if not professional in the modern sense⁴ (many athletes were still men of consequence and means), more of a spectator sport than a way of life for the mass of the population.⁵ It had long since lost its cultural role as a 'focus of Hellenism'. We happen to be rather well informed about student life in the fourth century, and it is plain that athletics no longer had any part in their curriculum. Indeed, the trend of intellectual life in late Antiquity as a whole (pagan before Christian) was thoroughly antithetical to the physical ideal originally embodied in the gymnasium. The withdrawal of the funds which had supported its institutions was merely the *coup de grâce*.

Another few years and gladiatorial games went the same way. Here too the cause is less obvious than usually assumed.⁶ It will no longer suffice to say that they had never been very popular to start with. Nor is imperial disapproval an adequate explanation. Emperors both pagan and Christian had been banning the pantomime since Augustus—but it always came back. And the scarcely less brutal *venationes* were allowed to continue into the sixth century. Financial considerations may have played some

¹ Harris, *Greek Athletes and Athletics* (1964), 129–135.

² O. A. Sawhill, *The Use of Athletic Metaphors in the Biblical Homilies of St. John Chrysostom*, Diss. Princeton 1928.

³ There is no full treatment of this important subject, but see H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité*⁶ (1965), 202f., and B. Bilinski, *L'agonistica sportiva nella Grecia antica: aspetti sociali e ispirazioni letterarie* (Acc. Polacca di Scienze e Lettere, Biblioteca di Roma, Confer. 12, 1961), Chs. 9–10.

⁴ On the professionalization of athletics, see H. W. Pleket, 'Some Aspects of the History of the Athletic Guilds', *Z. Pap. u. Epigr.* 1973, 197f. and 'Zur Soziologie des antiken Sports', *Med. van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome xxxvi* (1974), 57f.

⁵ cf. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration* (1972), 139.

⁶ See in particular G. Ville, 'Les Jeux de gladiateurs dans l'Empire chrétien', *MEFR lxxii* (1960), 273–335, with *Porphyrius*, p. 228.

part, but hardly a decisive one; both chariot-racing and beast shows must have been more expensive still.

The truth is probably something more general, if less tangible: a genuine change of popular taste. Perhaps the same taste that had tired of athletics, since by Roman times the 'heavy' athletes dominated the field, the boxer, the wrestler, and the pancratiast; represented in literature and art alike as hulking toughs with torn ears and tiny brains. Epigrams in their honour brag of the wounds they have dealt and the blood they have spilt¹—perhaps after all not so very far removed from the gladiator as one might have imagined.

But whatever the reasons, the disappearance, first of the gymnasium with all its dependent associations and most of the old sacred festivals, then of the gladiator, left a gap in the social life of the cities. Of the major public entertainments, only the mime and pantomime continued unchanged. It is surely no coincidence that it is precisely in the decades immediately following the disappearance of the gymnasium and gladiator that we begin to find evidence for chariot-racing as a sport in its own right in eastern cities: at Caesarea (in Cappadocia),² for example, in addition to tetrarchic capitals like Antioch³ and Nicomedia.⁴

If it be asked how and why chariot-racing came to fill this gap in the entertainment calendar of the cities, the answer is simple: imperial patronage. Emperors had built hippodromes in the East before the fourth century, but it was not till the age of the Tetrarchs that they began to establish regular capitals for themselves on the Roman model. And (as we have seen) these rulers of a restored Empire regularly built hippodromes adjoining their palaces, which—like their predecessors at Rome—they no less regularly attended.⁵ The stylized fourfold representation of the imperial family at the races on the obelisk of Theodosius in Constantinople is an eloquent commentary on the role the

¹ See the references collected by Robert, in *L'Épigramme grecque*, pp. 234–5.

² Saint Basil refers to 'horse-crazy' people dreaming about the races (*Hex.* 4.1), and at *PG* xxxi.285A to horses *γενεαλογούμενοι . . . ὡπερ οἱ ἄνθρωποι*.

³ P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale* (1955), 124; Petit does not himself ask whether it was in the Greek or Roman style, but it seems clear from the evidence he collects that the latter was the case.

⁴ Above, p. 209.

⁵ Above, p. 182.

hippodrome had come to occupy in the life of the new capital before the close of the fourth century.

With such encouragement it is hardly surprising that chariot-racing Roman style finally caught on in at least some of the larger eastern cities. Imperial stud farms¹ were established in Thrace and Asia Minor (notably in Cappadocia)² to ensure an adequate supply of horses for at any rate the imperial hippodromes. With chariot-racing now a regular feature of city life rather than an occasional event on the programme of an athletic festival, professional organizations on the lines of the Roman *factiones* must have been set up to cope with the increased and regular demand for trained horses, equipment, charioteers, and hippodrome personnel in general. It is not surprising that in due course the Roman circus colours followed, appropriately enough once charioteers had become professionals in the regular employ of permanent organizations rather than independent solo competitors or representatives of individual competitors in the tradition Greek manner. Not everywhere at once, it seems, since they had not yet reached (or caught on at) Antioch by the end of the fourth century, while we find them at Alexandria as early as 315.

Thus there is no problem in explaining the appearance of the Roman circus colours in the *hippodromes* of the eastern cities. But we are still no nearer seeing why, rather later it seems, they spread to the theatres and amphitheatres, an innovation in West and East alike. It is in fact directly linked to the other major change in public entertainments at this time; their financing and administration.

Up till the fourth century the Greek cities had enjoyed a large measure of financial autonomy under what has rightly been called a basically 'passive' Roman administration. This state of affairs came to a sudden end when, under Constantius II, civic properties and revenues were taken over by the state. As a consequence, the state had to shoulder many expenses formerly met by the cities,³ among which we are only here concerned with

¹ Procopius *BV* i.12.6; *BG* iv.27.8; Theoph. Sim. iii.1 and cf. p. 8.

² Cappadocian horses had of course long been famous: for a convenient collection of evidence see Ramon Teja, *Organizacion economica y social de Capadocia en el siglo IV, segun los padres Capadocios* (1974), 29f., 148f.

³ For a good recent discussion, Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration*, 149f.

public entertainments. At Antioch, for example, the Olympic games and Syriarchy were subsidized from imperial grants.¹ Chariot-racing in the fourth century was a liturgy on private persons, but such a heavy one that the emperors often lent a hand.² Julian donated the city 3,000 'lots' of land tax free to help councillors faced with this liturgy.³ Actors seem in general to have been paid straightforwardly from public funds.⁴

With the increasing impoverishment of the city councils, the financial responsibility of the state increased. We are lucky enough to have some figures for sixth-century Alexandria, where the councillors were asked to contribute 100 *solidi* for circus games, while the *Augustalis* was instructed to pay 320 *solidi* out of public funds for the purchase of new horses⁵—and this was presumably on top of the normal maintenance cost of stables and employees. According to Procopius, Justinian closed theatres, hippodromes, and amphitheatres 'even in Byzantium, so that the treasury might not have to supply the usual sums to the numerous and almost countless persons who derived their living from them'.⁶ We have an exact figure for sixth-century Caesarea (in Palestine): 5,629 $\frac{1}{4}$ *solidi* a year were set aside from the revenue of certain specified taxes for the exclusive use of the *hippotrophoi*.⁷

In short, it seems clear that by the fifth or sixth century public entertainments were largely if not entirely financed out of public funds all over the eastern provinces.

Now we have seen already that by the fourth century all the old independent 'ecumenical'⁸ guilds of actors, dancers, athletes, and so forth had disappeared. Thereafter, all public performers were organized on an entirely new basis; no longer grouped separately according to their individual specialities—dancer, bearkeeper, charioteer, or whatever—but in one

¹ Liebeschuetz, p. 141.

² Libanius, *Epp.* 381 (of 358).

³ Julian, *Misopogon* 370D.

⁴ Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, p. 146, to which add Chrysostom, *In Ep. I add Cor. Hom.* xii (PG lxi.103), ἐκ τῶν δημοσίων αὐτοῦς τρέφεις δαπανημάτων.

⁵ Justinian, *Edict* xiii.15 (with Johnson and West, *Byzantine Egypt* (1949), 104-5).

⁶ *Anecd.* xxvi.8-9.

⁷ See the inscription published by B. Lifshitz in *REG* lxx (1957), 118-32.

⁸ But not before their standard title, οἰκουμενικὴ σύνοδος, had been borrowed by the Church for its 'ecumenical' councils, as pointed out by H. Chadwick, *JTS* 1972, 132-5.

common state-financed and -administered guild. The evidence is clear.

By 426 we meet 'quartermasters of race-horses and the stage'; to judge from the military title, these officials must have been responsible for issuing troupes of performers with their pay or rations and race-horses with their fodder.¹ And it may be significant that, when boasting of his lack of interest in the games, the emperor Julian claimed to employ no official who 'like a prefect or general superintends actors and charioteers throughout the entire world'.² Can we perhaps infer from this that such an official normally did exist as early as 362, with military title and wide-ranging authority over both stage and circus?

Two letters of Cassiodorus show that by the sixth century both dancers and charioteers were paid (monthly) salaries direct from public funds.³ In another edict of 426 appear *cornicularii* (a high civil service rank) 'of the race-horses and stage', in an unspecified number of provincial cities.⁴ From fifth- and sixth-century western sources we learn of the *tribunus voluptatum*, concerned with the supervision of actors.⁵ It has sometimes been assumed that he did not exist in the East, but a chapter of John the Lydian seems to prove that he did—and connects him with the organization of chariot-racing.⁶ The implication is plain that theatre and stables now shared a common organization. And for an unequivocal link between the organization of theatre and amphitheatre, there is the pantomime of early sixth-century Constantinople who was bribed not to appoint the future Empress Theodora's stepfather to the vacant post of Green bearkeeper. Procopius explicitly remarks that the pantomime (presumably the senior dancer of the faction) had the power to make such appointments.⁷

It is no surprise that so important and expensive a service as public entertainments was unable to resist the relentless pressure

¹ *Cod. Theod.* viii.7.22, 'actuarii thymelae et equorum currulium'. *actuarii* must mean something like 'quarter-master' (so Jones, *Later Roman Empire* ii (1964), 706; Chastagnol oddly equates them with dancers and charioteers (*La Préfecture urbaine à Rome* (1960), 237, n.4 and 281-2).

² *Misop.* 339D (ὑπαρχος ἢ στρατηγός).

³ *Var.* ii.9; iii.51.

⁴ *Cod. Theod.* viii.7.21.

⁵ Jones, *Later Roman Empire* iii.213; cf. H. Jürgens, *Pompa Diaboli* (1972), 184.

⁶ *De mens.* iv.25.

⁷ *Anecd.* ix.5.

towards centralization and uniformity that is the hallmark of the late Roman world. If the state was going to foot the bill, it wanted value for money. Many festivals involved wild beast and theatrical displays as well as chariot-racing,¹ and a common organization must have simplified countless problems of arrangement and demarcation, not to mention cutting down on overheads. Most important, perhaps, to the mind of the late Roman bureaucrat, it gave the state total control.

This massive corporation drew its finances from one source, the state, but (as the numerous references to Blue and Green dancers and bearkeepers as well as charioteers show) for actual entertainment purposes it was split into two divisions, Blue and Green—or rather four, inasmuch as the presentation of dancers to all four colours in 490 implies that Red and White were (at this level anyway) counted as separate from their respective major colours.

Of all the old associations and partisanships of the Greco-Roman entertainment world only the four circus colours survived the changes we have been describing. For the partisan, of course, the disappearance of the old names meant merely that new ones became necessary. Whether it was his idea or the brainwave of some civil servant, once thought of it was almost inevitable and certainly the simplest solution to extend the one surviving set of names to *all* components of the new amalgamated entertainment guilds. Appropriate too, in that the rivalry of theatre partisans (more than) matched the long-famous rivalry of the circus partisans. Indeed, the theatre claque of Antioch (and doubtless most others) was already divided into two sections,² each supporting one of two rival pantomimes *before* its 'conversion' to Blues and Greens. Why invent new names, when the existing ones, the venerable colours patronized by five centuries of emperors, fitted the bill so neatly?

At all events, this is what happened. The consequences were far-reaching, the most obvious and immediate (though hitherto unappreciated) being a vast increase in the sheer *number* of Blues and Greens. They will have appeared for the first time in countless cities where previously there had been none at all because

¹ See (for example) the programme of sixth-century consular games in Justinian, Novel 105, with R. Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen* (1929), 67f.

² Libanius *Orat.* 41.9.

those cities did not possess hippodromes. Every city however small had at least one theatre, and we have seen already that most of the Blue and Green graffiti we have do indeed come from cities with no hippodrome. Chariot-racing became more popular in the late Empire, as we have seen, but there is little direct evidence for a substantial increase in the number of hippodromes after the fourth century,¹ nor is it likely that the smaller cities could have afforded so expensive a sport. It follows that there must have been many times more theatre partisans than circus partisans in the eastern cities as a whole.

So when we find more references to Blues and Greens in the literature of the early Byzantine age, this is not either chance on the one hand or proof that they had developed into something more than 'mere sports fans' on the other. There really were more of the new 'amalgamated' Blues and Greens. Theatre rowdies had been causing trouble for centuries in relative anonymity, usually in small groups of a fluid composition, perhaps hardly identifiable as groups at all. But once they acquired the notorious title of Blues and Greens, wearing appropriately coloured jackets, they became instantly recognizable and were bound to be singled out more easily and more often—by the law as well as by the historian. On the other hand, this increased publicity may well have played a part in actually increasing both the violence and the number of such disturbances. The growth of parallel phenomena in our own day has shown that punitive fines and excessive press coverage tend to reinforce and exacerbate the violence they purport to condemn.² Once one set of Blues and Greens had begun to acquire their deplorable 'Byzantine' reputation, others would emulate the achievement, unwilling (like the soccer fans today who defiantly chant 'we are the famous football hooligans') to disappoint public expectation by not living up to their stereotype. A spurious 'solidarity' was created; we hear, for example, of the Blues of Constantinople avenging a wrong done to the Blues of Tarsus (p. 286).

¹ Note, for example, that in the sixth century Procopius still reckons stoas, agoras, baths, and theatres the normal public amenities of a city (*Aed.* ii. 10.22); he does not mention hippodromes.

² See Stanley Cohen's *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1972), a classic study of the 'creation' of the Mods and Rockers of the early 1960s by the press and television.

These factors alone go a long way to explain the massive rise in factional disturbances. But there are other and more substantial consequences to the enrolling of theatre partisans under the banner of the Blues and Greens. Let us take a closer look at the theatre partisan.

The turbulence of theatre audiences was a commonplace at least as early as the second century B.C.—as Terence found to his cost.¹ To the passages of Cicero quoted in an earlier chapter² we can add Horace's famous remark that a visitor from another world would find Roman theatre audiences more of a spectacle than the shows.³ With the introduction of the pantomime under Augustus⁴ the situation went from bad to worse, and for half a millennium thereafter pantomime dancers were regularly identified as a source of popular disorders. Disturbances at the *ludi Augustales* of A.D. 14⁵ were followed by more serious riots the following year, with the death of a number of praetorians and a centurion as well as spectators—the classic pattern for the factional riot of the late Empire. There was a debate in the Senate, and measures were taken for controlling the behaviour of both pantomimes and partisans.⁶ Trouble continued, however, and the praetors, whose responsibility it was, were powerless. In 23 Tiberius himself raised the matter in the Senate again, and pantomimes were banned from Italy.⁷

¹ *Prolog. Hec.* 33f. *Prolog. Phorm.* 30f.; cf. W. Beare, *The Roman Stage*³ (1964), 95, 161 173–5; Balsdon, *Life and Leisure*, 272–3.

² p. 159 above.

³ *Epp.* ii.1.182–98.

⁴ Introduced into Rome, that is; the pantomime itself was by no means new (Robert, *Hermes* 1930, 109f.), nor can it without absurdity be called a 'typically Roman performance' (Beare, *op. cit.* 234).

⁵ Tacitus, *Ann.* i.54.3, cf. Dio lvi.47.2.

⁶ Tacitus, *Ann.* i.77. I am leaving out of count here the measures taken from time to time against mime actors (p. 161) since the cause was often political and I am trying to concentrate here on straightforward theatre rowdyism.

⁷ Balsdon (*Life and Leisure*, p. 422, n.192), like Furneaux (Comm. on Tacitus i², p. 508), infers from Suetonius' 'capita factionum et histriones, propter quos dissidebatur, relegavit' (*Tib.* 37.2) that only some pantomimes were expelled. But 'capita factionum' surely refers to the leaders of the partisans, not the dancers (who are already covered by *histriones*). Maricq (*BARB* xxxvi (1950), 400, n.2) was certainly right (against Friedlaender, *SG* ii¹⁰35) to interpret 'factiones histrionum' in Paulus-Festus, p. 86M, as 'troupes of dancers', but (a) in the case under discussion the *factiones* are distinguished from the dancers, (b) *factio* is in itself a perfectly appropriate word for rival bands of partisans, and (c) it is obvious that guilty partisans would have been punished (cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* i.77.5, xiii.25.4 for examples). Balsdon was misled by *histriones* in Suetonius (and *Ann.* xiv.4.4) into inferring that

On Tiberius' death Gaius at once recalled them.¹ Nero rashly withdrew the praetorian cohort which till then had at least done something to keep the violence of the theatre within bounds—and then offered extra incitements to the rivalry of both pantomimes and partisans. Things got out of hand, and by 56 even Nero was reduced to reissuing Tiberius' ban for a spell.² By 60 pantomimes were allowed back in the theatres, but no chances were taken of them bringing the Neroneia of that year into disrepute.³ They were expelled once more by Domitian, recalled by Nerva, expelled again by Trajan (though they were back again by the time of his Dacian triumph in 107).⁴ The astrologer Vettius Valens tells of a pantomime who was imprisoned during a riot (for which he was presumably held responsible) somewhere unfortunately unspecified in 123—and then released again in answer to popular pressure.⁵

From the earliest times Christian preachers had thundered against the danger to the faithful of the spectacles of the Greco-Roman world. Such condemnations usually embrace all spectacles without discrimination, but the one that is singled out above all others for its depravity and licentiousness is unquestionably the theatre. This is particularly clear in the case of Chrysostom, who frequently inveighs against both theatre and hippodrome.⁶ It is indeed obvious that not a little of the attraction of the pantomime lay in its suggestiveness, and the obscenity of the mime is well known. Yet it was not on moral grounds alone that priests and bishops warned their flocks against the theatre. Several passages of Chrysostom suggest that he was well aware of the extent to which the theatre constituted an incentive

actors were meant. But *histrion* is (confusingly enough) the standard word in literary Latin for the avoided technical term *pantomimus* (Greeks normally used *ἀρχηστῆς*). Tacitus, corroborated by Dio (lvii.21.3 and lix.2.5), clearly implies that all pantomimes were indeed banned from Italy between 23 and 37.

¹ Dio lix.2.5. ² Tacitus, *Ann.* xiii.25.4.

³ *Ann.* xiv.21.7.

⁴ Pliny, *Paneg.* 46.2f. (with B. Radice ad loc.).

⁵ v.10, p. 231 Kroll: cf. Neugebauer and van Hoesen, *Greek Horoscopes* (1959), 121, for the date.

⁶ 'It would be a Herculean task', wrote A. H. M. Jones (quoting a few examples), 'to assemble all the Christian diatribes against all forms of games' (*Later Roman Empire* iii.328). See too A. Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity* i² (1908), 300f. (fourth German edition 311f.) with (for the Latin fathers) H. Jürgens, *Pompa Diaboli* (1972), and (for the Greek fathers), Lampe, *Patr. Lexicon*, s.v. *θέατρον* (nothing similar s.v. *ἵπποδρόμος*).

to physical violence as well.¹ For fourth-century Antioch he is fully borne out by his pagan fellow Libanius; in a city where there was a thriving circus it was the theatre, not the circus, which provided the rowdies and the riots.² The rivalry of the hippodrome, he claimed, was 'free from strife'.³ For Alexandria, another city famous for its circus, the pogrom of 412 is said to have arisen from 'that inveterate evil in all cities, pantomime mania'.⁴

There is no evidence for rowdyism of this order among circus partisans in the early Empire. Even Dio Chrysostom's amusing and somewhat exaggerated address to the Alexandrians⁵ has more to say about the disgraceful behaviour of the Alexandrians at the theatre (note particularly the aphorism at § 32 that 'it is in the theatre that a people's character is revealed'). Petitions and protests, of course; but not regular and violent brawls arising directly from the behaviour of the charioteers in the arena. Never do we hear in the early Empire of charioteers being executed or exiled. In part at least the explanation lies in the different nature of the spectacles. The pantomime played directly on the emotions of his fans, deliberately whipping them up to a pitch of excitement where they were capable of anything. Excitement no less intense was kindled in the circus, but it was not directly caused by the individual charioteers in the same way. At all events, the Blues and Greens of the early Empire attained only a limited notoriety. Our sources suggest merely that their rivalry was senseless and that they thought of little but race-horses. As late as the fourth century this is the worst Libanius can say of the circus fans of Antioch,⁶ nor did Dio find much worse to say of the Alexandrians.

Once the ranks of the Blues and Greens were opened up to

¹ C. Baur, *Der hl. Johannes Chrysostomus und seine Zeit* i (1929), 192f. (cf. p. 199 'Vielschlimmer noch als Zirkus waren die Theater . . .') and ii (1930), 76f.; cf. too B. H. Vandenberghe, 'Saint Jean Chrysostome et les spectacles', *Zeitschr. f. Religions- und Geistesgesch.* vii (1955), 34-46.

² Petit, *Libanius*, 225f.

³ *Or.* xi.268, ἐπὶ ἀσρασίᾳστρον.

⁴ *Hist. Eccl.* vii.13. Amphitheatre riots are less well attested, but one famous example is the battle between the Nuceriens and Pompeians at Pompeii in 59; many were killed, and the senate voted to exile the ringleaders, disband all *collegia*, and close the amphitheatre for ten years (Tacitus, *Ann.* xiv.17: see W. O. Moeller, 'The Riot of A.D. 59 at Pompeii', *Historia* xix (1970), 84-95).

⁵ *Or.* xxxii (above, p. 208, n.7).

⁶ Petit, *Libanius*, 140-1.

theatre rowdies, inevitably this more numerous and turbulent influx overwhelmed the excitable but less openly violent circus partisans. There can surely be little doubt that it is the theatrical rather than the circus element that is mainly responsible for the marked deterioration in Blue and Green behaviour that follows the amalgamation.

The dominance of the theatrical element even in the hippodrome is nicely illustrated by a riot of 520, when on the day after the factions had been reconciled by the Emperor's guards, they assembled in the hippodrome and begged for their favourite—not charioteers, but pantomimes.¹ Similarly when the consul Longinus wanted to please the factions in 490, he presented them, not with new charioteers, but with new pantomimes.² We may compare a brief fragment of Malalas referring to the start of Anastasius' reign: 'there was a riot in the hippodrome; many people were killed and buildings burned, and the four dancers were exiled.'³

Unthinking use of the term '*circus* factions' for the Blues and Greens of the late empire has obscured this significant change of emphasis. Nor has it been noticed that many of the worst faction riots actually occurred in the theatre, not the hippodrome. Two of the most terrible of Anastasius' reign, in 499 and 501, filled the theatre with corpses.⁴ We have a full near-contemporary account of the second, in which 3,000 died, the worst such disaster before the Nika revolt.⁵ As a result, in 502 Anastasius banned pantomime dancing (a traditional response) from all cities of the Empire,⁶ having already banned it in Constantinople for a short period at the beginning of his reign,⁷ presumably in punishment for some similar outrage. In 498 he had banned wild beast shows; contemporary panegyrists imply humanitarian motives,⁸ but in a city engulfed by a wave of factional violence it is not hard to believe that Blue and Green behaviour in the amphitheatre was also a factor. Thus it was

¹ Malalas, fr. 43 (*Ex. de Insid.* p. 170, 31f.).

² Malalas, p. 386 Bonn.

³ Fr. 36 (*Ex. de Insid.* p. 167.21f.).

⁴ Jo. Ant. fr. 101 (*Exc. de Insid.* p. 142); Malalas, fr. 39 (*ibid.* p. 168).

⁵ Marcellinus, *Chron.* s.a. 501.

⁶ See *Porphyrius*, p. 231.

⁷ Malalas, fr. 36 (*Ex. de Insid.* p. 167)—not precisely datable (*Martindale*, 'Public Disorders', p. 27, seems to identify this incident with one or other of the Brytae affairs, but the Malalas excerpts plainly locate it before the Isaurian troubles (fr. 37) and quite separately from the Brytae riots (fr. 39).

⁸ See Procopius of Gaza, *Pan. Anast.* 16, and Priscian, *Pan. Anast.* 162f.

the circus alone which he left undisturbed. This is no argument from silence, for it can be demonstrated that it was precisely in the decade following the year 500 that the great Porphyrius rose to fame at Constantinople, honoured by an unprecedented series of statues in the hippodrome which we know from the extant inscriptions to have been erected with Anastasius' permission.¹ Indeed, it seems clear that Anastasius positively encouraged the Blues and Greens of the hippodrome—at least in their harmless rivalries over charioteers. The pagan historian Zosimus, writing *c.* 500, reproaches Augustus for introducing, in pantomime dancing, an evil into the Roman world that was to fill its cities with *στάσεις* and *ταραχαί* for 500 years, 'right up to the present day'.² His immediate inspiration was no doubt the turbulence of 499/501, though his tense suggests that he was writing before the ban of 502. As with Socrates, his opposite number from the Christian camp, the implication is that the hippodrome was not a threat of the same order.

The factional troubles we hear of in Rome at about the same time (quite unconnected and purely local) also concern pantomimes.³ The next major wave of faction rioting in the East came under Justin I. We have no specific details, but the chroniclers state that it spread throughout the Empire and lasted for most of Justin's reign.⁴ In 524/5 severe measures were finally taken to deal with rioters, and in 525 an edict was issued banning *θεώρια* and expelling pantomimes (a familiar measure) from the whole East.⁵ *θεώρια* here is normally translated 'spectacles', and while it might be unwise to exclude the possibility that Malalas meant to include hippodromes as well as theatres,⁶ *θεωρία* is in fact the standard technical term for a theatrical show in the Greek cities of the Roman period.⁷ Against the background sketched above—and especially in view of the singling out of pantomimes—it seems natural to conclude that once more it was the partisans of the theatre who were responsible for most of

¹ Porphyrius, 242f.

² Zosimus, i.6.1, with my comments in *Philologus* cxiii (1969), 108-10.

³ Cassiodorus, *Var.* i.20, i.32-3.

⁴ Malalas, p. 416.3f.; Theophanes A.M. 6012. ⁵ Malalas, p. 422.

⁶ *Venationes* were very rare by now: Porphyrius, p. 229.

⁷ L. Robert, *Études anatoliennes* (1937), 318-19, and in *Mél. Dussaud* (1939), 737-9 (= *Op. Min. Sel.* i.609-10); at no point do I rest my argument on the use of the word *θέατρον* alone, for it is often used loosely, sometimes unquestionably to denote a hippodrome.

the trouble. Again in 529 a disturbance in the theatre of Antioch led to what was proclaimed at the time as its permanent closure.¹

The Antioch pogrom of 507 is the first such affair on record where the ringleader was a charioteer—Porphyrius. It is true that by the fourth century we do have evidence for riots focusing on charioteers as well as pantomimes. But a closer look might suggest that little real change had yet taken place. The riot at Rome in 355 was a demonstration against the imprisonment of a charioteer.² Similarly at Thessalonica in 390, the riot which Theodosius punished with wholesale massacre was again sparked off by the imprisonment of a charioteer (for a sexual offence).³ It may be added that in neither case is there any mention of Blues or Greens; it is thus illegitimate to count them as 'faction' riots proper.

The author of the *Expositio*, in his account of eastern hippodromes, singles out Constantinople alone for its violence ('saevissime spectatur').⁴ Of the Nicomedian hippodrome he says only that it played to full houses.⁵ Rather illuminating here is a poem by Amphilochius of Iconium⁶ containing a long invective against the games in three sections; theatre, amphitheatre, and circus. The last section is devoted to disproving what Amphilochius evidently felt to be the dangerous (and presumably therefore prevalent) notion that the circus was 'more tame' (ἡμερώτερον) than the other two. Far from it, he protests; the circus 'tears cities apart, causes the people to revolt, teachers fighting. . .'

πόλεις διασπᾶ, δῆμον εἰς στάσεις φέρει,
μάχας διδάσκει . . . (153-4)

But this very general diatribe is followed by some remarkably precise allegations: the circus is said to lead to the downfall of hitherto well-ordered cities; riot stains the people's hands with

¹ Malalas, pp. 448-9 (in fact it was soon doing business as usual again).

² Ammian xv.7.2; was he perhaps arrested for magic practices, like so many charioteers in late fourth century Rome: (*Porphyrius*, p. 245)? There is nothing in the context to suggest that he had been arrested in the first place for causing a riot.

³ Sozomen, *HE* viii.25 (for all the other sources—and some dubious interpretations—see I. Hahn, *Byz. neugr. Jahrb.* xix (1966), 350-72).

⁴ § 50. ⁵ § 49, 'diligentius spectatur'.

⁶ There is no ground for the early ascription of the poem to Gregory Nazianzen (as in *PG* xxxvii.1577f.): see now the edition of E. Oberg, *Amphilochii Iconiensis iambi ad Seleucum* (Patristische Texte und Studien 9, 1969).

the blood of rulers, and retribution follows in the form of mass executions.

How often did anything as drastic as this happen, we might ask? In the last quarter of the fourth century the answer is only once, at Thessalonica in 390.¹ So anxious is Amphilochius to discredit the unfortunate idea that the circus is harmless that he generalizes from this one (admittedly horrifying) case.

So it is the 'circus' as well as the 'factions' (p. 14) in 'circus factions' that is misleading. The Blues and Greens of the late Empire consisted more of theatre than circus partisans. This is particularly clear (as we shall see in the next chapter) in the case of Antioch, where the very active Blues and Greens of the late fifth and the sixth centuries are not, as has often been thought, a completely new phenomenon;² they are simply the theatre rowdies of the fourth century under new names.³

The Blues and Greens that were to prove such a scourge to the late Roman cities did not then arise spontaneously in opposition to the authorities of the late Roman world. They were in effect created by those very authorities. Not on the face of it a very wise move on the part of the authorities. Is it really possible that they were unfamiliar with the facts about theatre partisans laboriously assembled over the last few pages? Was it really just a disastrous mistake?

The next chapter will suggest that it should in fact be seen as an attempt (paradoxical—and not so unsuccessful—as it might seem) to control theatre partisans, and guide their enthusiasm into the service of the emperor.

¹ As seen by R. Browning, *CR* xxi (1971), 138. I have no doubt that he is correct, and that the poem therefore dates from 390 or later. Oberg and earlier editors had been content with a *terminus post quem* of 381 or thereabouts.

² So (for example) G. L. Kourbatov, *Congrès international des Orientalistes* i (Les Travaux xxv, Moscow 1962), 10.

³ As hinted already by Liebeschuetz, *Antioch* (1972), 213, 279–80.

IX. The Growth of Circus Ceremonial

Protocol at the games

THE games had always occupied a central place in the social and religious life of a Greco-Roman city—above all at Rome.

From early in the second century B.C. the front seats in the theatre were reserved for senators, and from 67 B.C. the next fourteen rows for equites (a privilege often threatened and jealously guarded). Vestal virgins too had seats at the front, as did distinguished people of all kinds, following a widespread Greek custom. From Augustus' day the same arrangements were extended to the circus. In the Flavian amphitheatre a large number of seats were reserved for a wide variety of bodies, guilds, priestly colleges, and the like in addition to the Senate, who under Odoacer had individual seats, the stone being engraved afresh when it changed ownership. It was a punishment and a disgrace to lose one's reserved seat—and a crime to usurp another's.¹

It follows that, on major festival days at least, these seats were expected to be filled by the appropriate occupants, like the reserved pews in an English country church. For those of any station in life, going to the games at Rome was more than a pleasure; it was a duty. It is plain from Dio's unforgettable account of the trepidation in which he sat in his conspicuous seat in the amphitheatre while Caracalla performed, chewing his laurel garland to check the hysterical laughter that might have cost him his head,² that he at least would rather have been elsewhere.

For those of a mystical turn of mind the circus could be seen as the world in miniature. The arena was the earth; the *euripus* (*spina*), with its great water-tanks, the sea; the obelisk, equidistant between the *metae*, pointed up to the sky, sacred to the

¹ Balsdon, *Life and Leisure*, pp. 260-1, give a good summary.

² lxxii.21.2.

sun. The track was a circle like the year, with 12 *carceres* for the 12 months of the year, 24 races for the 24 hours of the day, 7 laps for the 7 days of the week. The 4 colours corresponded to the 4 elements, the four seasons . . . or what you will.¹ Such fancies were a symbolic expression of a real truth; with the emperor in his box, surrounded by representatives of all ranks and classes seated in due order, the circus was indeed a microcosm of the Roman state.²

All Roman games, whether at the circus or theatre, were in origin religious festivals. Gladiatorial games, though not *ludi* proper, were in origin an offering to the souls of the departed, and later they were often linked to celebrations of the imperial cult. The great athletic festivals were likewise founded in honour of some god (if only, in the Roman period, the reigning emperor). However secular the spectacles themselves became, the religious framework and ceremonial endured. Thus the deeply religious atmosphere of Byzantine hippodrome ceremonial, new perhaps in its intensity and of course in its Christianity, was nevertheless a perfectly natural development.

The Romans had always cheered their heroes and booed their villains with gusto, whether in the streets, the market places, or at the games. If such acclamations were dear to the Republican politician, they became indispensable to the Roman emperor. They grew more extravagant and less spontaneous; they also centred more and more on the theatre and circus, where the emperor made the most of his formal appearances. The circus petitions and protests we examined in Ch. VII give a perhaps misleading impression of spontaneity; even here there was (as we saw) an elaborate etiquette to be observed, on both sides. Even the ribaldry of the theatre became something of a ritual (it would have been more 'spontaneous' of the emperor to object to such gibes). Both parties were acting out a role—a role that came to vary less and less according to the actors:

Certain forms of expressing approval or disagreement, joy and thanks, demands and complaints became customary and traditional

¹ P. Wuilleumier, 'Cirque et astrologie', *Mél. de l'école franç. de Rome* xliv (1927) 184f.; see too now the elaborate discussion in G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (1974), 320f.

² A. Alföldi announces a forthcoming study on this theme in *Die monarchische Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreiche* (1970), p. xviii.

until, in the later Roman and Byzantine ceremonial, the manner of uttering sentiments in the emperor's presence was subjected to rigid prescriptions. Improvised shouts were not lacking, but they were grouped around a skeleton of standard phrases and formulae which were heard time and again.

The impact of Christianity, with its own special terminology and above all its liturgy, was still further to accentuate this rigidification of the forms: 'No matter how much the liturgical language had originally borrowed from that of the court, the language of the court ceremonial stiffened as the terms became filled with ecclesiastical spirit and echoed the language of the liturgy.'¹

What little is known of the development of acclamations in imperial ceremonial over the first three centuries is admirably analysed in a famous paper by A. Alföldi.² For the *development* of Byzantine ceremonial surprisingly little has been done. The standard treatment of the subject by O. Treitinger,³ excellent though it is, is basically static, passing direct from the ground covered by Alföldi to the fully developed chants and songs of the ninth and tenth centuries, of which we have such an abundance in the *Book of Ceremonies*.

A foreign visitor to medieval Constantinople might have observed with some surprise that those who performed the major part of the imperial ceremonial, in the palace and cathedral no less than the hippodrome, appeared to be circus fans. That the Blues and Greens should have provided cheer leaders or even choirs to celebrate their teams might seem natural enough. But how was it that they came to sing hymns at the wedding of an emperor in the palace or at the coronation of his son in Saint Sophia?

The traditional explanation is that this ceremonial role (which is held to be quite unimportant) was given to the factions as a consolation by some reforming emperor (variously identified) who 'stripped' them of their former political powers.⁴ Thus its growth is placed very late, usually during the eighth

¹ E. H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae: a Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (1946), 65-6.

² *Röm. Mitt.* 1934, 79f. (= *Mon. Repräs.* 79f.).

³ *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee* (1938).

⁴ e.g. Dvornik, *BM* 1946, 131 (Leo III), and cf. p. 295 below.

century. This is the one part of Gibbon's picture of the factions which has not been rejected by later historians:¹

The task of applause was not abandoned to the rude and spontaneous voices of the crowd. The most convenient stations were occupied by the Blue and Green factions of the Circus; and their furious conflicts, which had shaken the capital, were insensibly sunk to an emulation of servitude.

It is easy to show that this is simply not true. The factions already possessed the greater part of their ceremonial role even at the time when they are believed to have been most politically active.

As usual, it is with Roman practice that we must begin. In many respects (as we have seen) Byzantine practice did evolve naturally out of Roman practice. But *not* the role of the factions. This is the one point where Alföldi's account goes astray. He took it for granted that the circus factions formed the natural focus for the organization of acclamations among the *plebs* of Rome.²

The only text he was able to cite is the exchange between Blues and Greens over the Green race-horse Pertinax in 186 (p. 197). Yet this has nothing to do with imperial acclamations. The Greens cheer the victory of their own horse and the Blues make a quip about Pertinax the future emperor. The Blue quip might seem to prefigure the many such from both colours in Byzantine times, but in the early Empire it stands alone. In the last chapter we saw that a number of developments overtook the Blues and Greens at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries. We may now add to the list recognition that before (once more) the late fifth century, the factions are never mentioned, much less singled out, in connection with the chanting of either praise or protest in the circus. Is this yet another coincidence?

The answer set forth in this chapter rests on more than the argument from silence. It can, I think, be shown that the formal chanting which is so characteristic of the Blues and Greens of

¹ *Decline and Fall*, ch. liii, ed. Bury, vi (1902), 85, continuing: 'By the pen of Constantine Porphyrogenitus this science of form and flattery has been reduced into a pompous and trifling volume, which the variety of succeeding times might enrich with an ample supplement'.

² *Röm. Mitt.* 1934, 81.

Byzantine times is altogether foreign to the circus of early imperial Rome. It was a phenomenon of the *theatre*.

The theatre claque

We have seen already that it was the theatre, not the circus, where all the worst riots took place. This was in no small measure due to the theatrical claques, small bands of partisans hired by individual pantomime dancers to ensure that their act was adequately appreciated.

Now claqueurs may often have caused a lot of trouble, but they were more than just rowdies. The function of a claque (they are still to be found in opera houses) is to stimulate and lead applause, which in Roman theatres tended to take the form of rhythmical chanting. We have no direct information on the working of ancient claques, but the fact that Libanius had to warn a new governor of the activity of the Antioch claque¹ confirms what modern practice would in any case have suggested: that if working properly it was undetectable. According to a member of the claque of the Vienna State Opera in the 1920s, the 'claqueur's most unpardonable crime is to start applause which is not taken up by the public and perhaps is even drowned out by enraged hisses'.² This is bound to have been equally true in Roman times. If the efforts of the claque are too obvious, the rest of the audience will be indignant and resist, to the humiliation of the performer who is employing it and the frustration of its own efforts.

The normal technique is for individual claqueurs to distribute themselves at strategic points round the theatre and wait for signs from their leader, a man very experienced at gauging the mood of an audience.³ Tacitus tells us of a certain Percennius, 'former leader of theatre gangs', who later became a soldier and was able to use his gifts and experience ('procax lingua et miscere coetus histrionali studio doctus') as one of the ring-leaders in the mutiny of the Pannonian legions in A.D. 14.⁴ Most of our evidence comes from late fourth-century Antioch, where

¹ *Or. xli passim*, with Liebeschuetz, *Antioch* (1972), 214.

² Joseph Wechsberg, *Looking for a Bluebird* (Penguin ed. 1948), 80. There are many references to a much less subtle claque at the Paris opera in Ch. 1 of Zola's *Nana*.

³ See the full and fascinating account in Wechsberg, Chs. viii-ix.

⁴ *Ann.* 1.16.3.

(as a score and more passages from Libanius and John Chrysostom show) the claque was a real problem, numbering (so Libanius alleged) 400 desperadoes.¹

Now fourth-century Antioch was an imperial capital with a hippodrome, one of the very few eastern cities of this period where chariot-racing was a passion. Yet it is absolutely clear from Libanius and Chrysostom that the activities of the claque were restricted to the theatre (where virtually all the demonstrations and riots took place, too). Both writers refer to both theatre and hippodrome very frequently, and there can be no doubt that, surprising as it may seem, the claqueurs, those 'who sell their voices to the dancers', did *not* exercise their skills in the hippodrome.

Hired or organized applause of this sort was generally recognized as something peculiar to the theatre. Particularly revealing is the behaviour of the supporters of Paul, bishop of Antioch under Aurelian, as criticized by a synod of other bishops: 'those who do not applaud or wave their handkerchiefs *as in a theatre*, or shout and jump up in the same way as do the men and women who are his partisans (*στρασιῶται*) . . . these he rebukes and insults'.² Compare Eunapius: 'For the sake of applause *in the theatres*, Constantine organized drinking bouts of vomiting men . . . because he loved praise.'³ Evidently Constantine had recruited clagues to sing his praises, following in the footsteps here of Nero, with his infamous Augustiani, 5,000 strong if we are to believe Suetonius. The Augustiani apparently followed Nero around, but since their main function was to praise his singing, it seems clear that they too were formed on the model of theatrical clagues.⁴

Why is it that, in the early Empire at any rate, the claque should not have invaded and dominated the circus as it did the theatre? Hardly just custom. The main answer is surely quite simply that the circus was too big.

A well-distributed and organized claque of 400 might manage to dominate a theatre seating perhaps 5,000–10,000. But it would be lost in a circus with a capacity of 100,000 and more,

¹ See the excellent discussion by Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, 208–18 and 278–80, to which I am much indebted.

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* vii.30.9.

³ *Vit. Soph.* vi.2.8 (452).

⁴ Suetonius, *Nero* 20.3, with Alföldi, *Röm. Mitt.* 1934, 82.

separated by a huge arena. And it is perhaps unlikely that many performers could afford a *claque* of 400 anyway.¹ (The reason that the Blues and Greens were later able to influence an entire hippodrome audience is partly that they were more numerous (2,400 in 602), partly that they did not need to work under cover; they sat together in a central position, with the eyes of all upon them waiting for a cue.) It may be added that the *claque* could not in any case have served the same function in the hippodrome. Applause was (and is) the life-blood of a performer in the theatre. A charioteer won or lost by his skill; with pantomimes it was a contest of popularity, in which applause or its opposite could make all the difference.² The charioteer could never have had the same incentive as a pantomime to hire a *claque*.

This distinction between the behaviour of circus and theatre fans certainly operated in early imperial Rome (though it tends to be obscured in modern works, where 'circus' is often carelessly used as a general purpose term to denote any Roman arena). After the death of Commodus, Dio reports, the people called him 'accursed wretch and tyrant, adding in jest such terms as "the gladiator", "the charioteer", "the left-handed", "the ruptured". To those senators on whom the fear of Commodus had rested most heavily, the crowd called out: "Huzza! Huzza! You are saved; you have won" (*εὕγε, εὕγε, ἐσώθης, ἐνίκησας*). Indeed, all the shouts that they had been accustomed to utter with a kind of rhythmic swing (*εὐρύθμως πως ἐκβοᾶν*) in the theatres, they now chanted (*ἐξῆδον*) with certain changes that made them utterly ridiculous!³ It is surely the theatre *claque* Dio has in mind. He was well aware (better aware than his modern commentators) that things were normally done differently in the circus. Compare his account of the great circus demonstration against the civil war in 196.⁴ First the people watched the races 'without applauding any of the charioteers, as was their custom'; then, after calling for silence, they 'suddenly

¹ οὐ πλείους ἢ τετρακόσιοι, Lib., Or. xli.9; since they worked in anonymity this can only be a very approximate guess. Modern opera *clagues* are naturally much less numerous, 'thirty to forty regulars' at Vienna in the 1920s (Wechsberg, p. 78), and the same number at La Scala in the 1960s (*Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera* (1964), p. 79).

² See the comparison in *Porphyrius*, p. 247.

³ lxxiv.2.3 (where the Loeb transl. has 'amphitheatres').

⁴ lxxv.4.4-6.

all clapped their hands at the same moment, and chanted together . . .', after which Dio remarks that 'in all this they were surely moved by some divine inspiration; for in no other way could so many myriads of men have begun to utter the same shouts at the same time, like a carefully trained chorus, or have spoken the words without a mistake, just as if they had rehearsed them.' Of course they had rehearsed them, remarks a modern critic.¹ Now we have seen that Dio was a veteran circus-goer, with a keen interest in popular demonstrations. On this occasion he is reporting what he saw with his own eyes. Can we really accuse him of such 'naïveté'? The same critic writes of the demonstration against Cleander in 190 that 'shouts were even led by a woman cheer leader'.² The 'even' is misleading. It was precisely the fact that in 196 there was *no* cheer leader that astonished Dio. What really impressed him about this particular demonstration is surely that what was quite normal in the smaller and more intimate atmosphere of a theatre, took place *without* any obvious prompting in the vast area of the Circus Maximus. It must have been virtually impossible to rig a *circus* demonstration that would look (as this one did) entirely spontaneous.

The claque in the later Empire

I am not of course trying to suggest either that circus demonstrations were never rigged or that the techniques of the claque were never used in the circus. What I am arguing is that the claque was not an *everyday* phenomenon of the circus as it undoubtedly was of the theatre. So when we find that our evidence does not link the Blues and Greens of the Roman circus either with demonstrations or with behaviour characteristic of the claque, I suggest that, rather than presume gaps in that evidence to fit a theory, we should accept it as a true reflection of the character of the Blues and Greens of the early empire. They were not claques.

But from the late fifth century on, whatever else they may have been or become, the Blues and Greens of the eastern cities *were* unquestionably claques. Indeed, they emerge as the only

¹ Whittaker, *Historia* 1964, 363; so too Africa, *Journ. of Interdisciplinary History* 1971, 12.

² lxxii.13.3, cf. Whittaker, p. 363.

clagues there were, everywhere leading both theatre and circus audiences in praise and protest alike.

In the light of the conclusions reached in the preceding chapter, it should be obvious how and when this change took place. It remains to consider why.

When the former circus colours were extended to the theatre, the former theatre clagues will automatically have become Blue and Green clagues. So it is certainly no coincidence that our first evidence for Blue and Green activity as clagues does indeed date from the period after the amalgamation. Yet the extension of clague activity from theatre to circus is not to be seen as an *incidental* consequence of the amalgamation. Indeed it was surely cause rather than consequence.

The role of clagues and acclamations in city life took a rather sinister turn towards the end of the fourth century. The use of acclamations to bring pressure on local authorities is of course a well-attested phenomenon throughout the early Empire,¹ more often than not in the theatre, where people in the Greek cities had always met for official receptions, proclamations, debates, trials, and so forth. Josephus refers to the people of Antioch 'holding an assembly' (τοῦ δήμου . . . ἐκκλησιάζοντος) in the theatre,² and it was to the theatre that the Ephesians rushed the companions of Saint Paul for questioning.³ Countless other examples could be cited,⁴ of which not the least telling is the frequency with which an insistent theatre crowd forms the backdrop for stirring events in the romances of the early Empire.⁵

But by the end of the fourth century we find the delivery of acclamations developed to a fine (and disturbing) professionalism by the theatre clague of Antioch. Thanks to the civic concern of Libanius we happen to be particularly well informed about late fourth-century Antioch, but evidence from elsewhere shows that it was not an isolated development at one

¹ J. Colin, *Les Villes libres de l'Orient gréco-romain et l'envoi au supplice par acclamations populaires* (1965), 109–52.

² *BJ* vii.47; cf. Herodian viii.6.8, where the people of Rome rush to the hippodrome ὡσπερ ἐκκλησιάζοντες (words found so surprising by Mendelssohn that he wished to delete them).

³ Acts 19:29.

⁴ e.g. Colin, *op. cit.* p. 105, n.3.

⁵ Chariton viii.7 (ἐξίωμεν εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν . . . λόγου δὲ θάπτου ἐπληρώθη τὸ θέατρον); Ps. Lucian, *Asinus* 53 (where θέατρον is mistranslated 'amphitheatre' in the new Loeb edition); Apuleius, *Met.* iii.2.

city. I quote from Wolfgang Liebeschuetz's excellent recent study of Libanius' Antioch:¹

When a new governor came to the theatre for the first time, the claque would arrange for him to be received in absolute silence. Evidently the leaders of the claque were able to intimidate the rest of the audience. The disconcerted official would then have some popular announcement made, by means of which he might hope to win some cheers. This too would be to no purpose; finally, the governor would be compelled to negotiate with the leaders of the claque, and to win their support and cheers, at a price . . .

A governor could not avoid acclamations. He was obliged by law to attend public spectacles on certain occasions. Moreover an invitation to come to the theatre issued to the governor by the assembled people had some formal significance.

It is worth inquiring how it was that the claque could control a governor's reception in the theatre. Hardly just by intimidation; even if they really did number as many as 400 at Antioch, they could not have been very formidable when distributed round a theatre, nor does Libanius imply that the population at large was actually afraid of them. Their method can be inferred from the methods employed by the Vienna claque to demonstrate its indispensability to singers or conductors who tried to do without it.² An audience accustomed (even if it does not know it) to being led in its applause will hold back until that lead comes; if it is withheld, the applause will be late and sparse; if it is deliberately begun early, or late, the performance on stage will be wrecked. The Vienna claque was usually reinstated after a few nights of tactics like this.

Now as a result of the growing formalization of the expression of public opinion at all levels in the late Empire, the local governor, no less than the emperor himself, was greeted, not just with respectful applause, but with an elaborate set sequence of acclamations. Here is an excerpt from the greeting accorded the new governor of Edessa in 449 (the purely formal preliminaries to the real purpose of the address):³

God is one. Victory to the Romans! Our Lord have pity on us, our

¹ *Antioch* (1972) 212, 210.

² Wechsberg, pp. 84f.

³ O. Seeck, *Rh. Mus.* lxxiii (1920), 84-101, comparing the structure of the Ibas acclamations with those against the ex-governor Lucianus recorded in Libanius, *Or.* lvi.16 (cf. too Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, 211). A fascinating series of acclamations

Lords victorious for ever! May the victory of Theodosius grow strong! May the victory of Theodosius Augustus grow strong! May the victory of Valentinian Augustus increase! May the victory of our Lords increase! Power to the victory of those that love God! Countless be the years of the orthodox! One God, victory to Theodosius! One God, victory to Valentinian!

Many be the years of the prefect! Many be the years of Protogenes! Many be the years of the consul [Protogenes was ordinary consul as well as prefect]! A golden statue for the prefect! . . .

More in the same vein, followed by similar sections on the *magister militum* Zeno, the patrician Anatolius, the *comes* Theodosius, and (finally) the man who was actually being addressed, the *praeses* Chaireas. A string of simple and no doubt familiar formulae, not too difficult for even quite a large gathering to pick up provided there were a few leaders with clear voices and a good sense of rhythm who knew the score (as with the psalms in a modern church). But quite beyond an unaided theatre audience. It was almost inevitable that those who led the applause and acclamations for the pantomimes should do the same for the governor (who could do it better?). So if the claqueurs withheld their contribution, or (worse) came in too early or too late, the result would be chaos.

Not surprisingly, the governor often gave way. There was nothing to be gained by simply staying away from the theatre, since the claque could infiltrate any crowd anywhere, outside his residence or in his audience hall or even in church.¹ Nor is his capitulation to be seen in terms of the vanity of an individual governor, anxious for applause. The deliberate withholding of an established courtesy from the emperor's representative was an insult to the emperor as well as his representative. Such behaviour could not be ignored, yet since the due ceremonial

(unpublished, but kindly shown to me by Charlotte Roueché) on the pillars of a colonnade in Carian Aphrodisias similarly work down from the emperor, prefects, etc. to the local dignitary who built it.

¹ Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, 217. The greatest triumph of the Vienna claque under its great chef Schostal was to infiltrate the audience of the 1926 Concours d'Élégance (Vienna's annual motor show) disguised as gentlemen, and to secure by their applause the award of the three gold ribbons to Lancia, Fiat, and Auburn-Cort. The record number of 102 members received 'two schillings and a large sandwich' each from the manufacturers for their efforts (Wechsberg, pp. 103-6). At political meetings in Greece today claques operate quite openly, led by megaphones.

could not be extracted by force, if it was to be had at all it had to be bought.

But there is another more far-reaching reason why we find late Roman governors taking such demonstrations more seriously than their predecessors.

We have already seen how, from the fourth century on, the Roman government came to exercise more and more direct control over the cities. It was presumably as something of a check on the increased power this gave the governor that Constantine enacted in 331 that records of acclamations expressing both praise and blame of governors should be sent direct to him, so that he could use them in determining appropriate punishment or promotion. This at once became established practice; indeed, provincials carrying such reports were permitted free use of the public post.¹

It was an idea well meant but inevitably misconceived. Constantine shared, it seems, the simple conviction of many modern admirers of the Antioch clique and its successors the Blues and Greens, that, though such public expressions of approval and disapproval could hardly be expected to be spontaneous, it was nevertheless easy enough to tell which were genuine and which the work of private supporters ('si verae voces sunt, nec ad libidinem per clientelas effusae'). But the point about cliques is that they were *not* 'clients', whose presence and activity could be recognized and allowed for, but hired professionals, skilled at covering their tracks.

The modern argument that even clique-led demonstrations 'probably represented public opinion fairly accurately', on the grounds that 'people will not demonstrate heartily contrary to their real sentiments and the cheer leaders were no doubt aware of this fact',² is rather beside the point. The point is not that clique-led demonstrations did not reflect genuine grievances (there were always enough genuine grievances near the surface in late Roman cities to make the invention of spurious ones quite superfluous), but that the cliques were able to exploit such grievances to their own financial gain and to the political gain of those who hired them.

It may be true that 'they could not be bought and sold by

¹ *Cod. Theod.* i.16.6; viii.5.32.

² A. H. M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* ii (1964), 723.

anyone'¹ (in its own interests no *claque* would undertake a demonstration that was likely to fail),² but the fact remains that they could be bought. And it is hardly surprising that among their best customers we should find the governor. If his future career depended on favourable acclamations, no governor could afford to let too many unfavourable sets be sent to Constantinople.

It has been suggested that the activities of the *claque* were stimulated by the tensions produced by the 'general economic decline of the empire', the 'new pressures' to which the 'underdogs in city and country were subjected'.³ The connection postulated is not obvious enough to make such a very general hypothesis plausible. More natural to conclude, with Liebeschutz, that *claque* demonstrations 'were not so much the expression of new tensions as a new form of political behaviour'. As he rightly emphasizes,⁴

The fact that acclamations were officially recognized as an occasion for making complaints opened up a new means of communication between population and governor, by-passing the usual channels, whether official, curial, or provided by patrons. This in turn gave new power to any group that was in a position to organize acclamations. This possibility was first exploited by the *claque* and later by the factions of the hippodrome, but it was available to others also.

To bishops, for example—and their rivals. Gangs of supporters become normal in ecclesiastical disputes. More usually fanatical monks than paid *claqueurs*, but the methods they used were plainly modelled on those of the *clagues*.⁵ The acclamations from Edessa quoted above culminated in a denunciation of Ibas, the bishop of Edessa. On the strength of these acclamations and two petitions from the governor the emperor had Ibas deposed. Two years later, after no fewer than 200 clerics of Edessa had borne witness to Ibas' orthodoxy, he was reinstated. More important than the discovery that the original acclamations had evidently not been representative of public opinion at Edessa but the work of Ibas' enemies, is what they reveal about where effective power lay in a late Roman city. The deeper truth that the growth of the role of acclamations discloses is not so much

¹ R. Browning, *JRS* xlii (1952), 18.

² No less true (of course) of the opera *claque*; Wechsberg, pp. 82-3.

³ Browning, p. 18.

⁴ p. 216.

⁵ Liebeschutz, p. 217.

an upsurge in the democratic spirit or an increase in popular participation as a breakdown in the traditional mechanism of government in the Greek city. The council, the traditional governing body of the city, played no role in the Ibas affair.¹ All the emperor had to act on was the acclamations and the governor's petitions. This is not to say that individual councillors, the 'leading citizens' (*οἱ πρωτεύοντες*), were of no account; but it now suited them better to use their influence privately on the governor or else to organize acclamations (in the case of Ibas probably both). If the emperor's method was to act on a governor's reports when they were borne out by 'public opinion' as manifested in the form of acclamations, then naturally it was in one or other of these two directions that vested interests were going to direct their efforts. It may be that the *cliques* did sometimes help the poorer classes to express their grievances effectively—and even to obtain redress. But if we are to appreciate the true significance of the rise of the *clique*, we must also look at it in this wider perspective—and bear in mind that it was after all composed of men who normally earned their living hiring applause to pantomime dancers. It would surely be more than optimistic to expect their motives to be idealistic.

Now sooner or later the central government is bound to have discovered that its (in intention wholly praiseworthy) attempt to sound public opinion was more open to abuse than it had imagined. What is likely to have most disturbed any late Roman government is the realization that a body which exercised such power should have no official status, pay no taxes, and (above all) be responsible to no one. Liebeschuetz quotes the later factions as an exact parallel to the Antioch *cliques*, claiming both as unofficial bodies that exercised effective power in the city, but nevertheless did not 'become victims of counter-action by the imperial officials'.² This is the one point where his excellent analysis goes wrong. The story of the Blues and Greens in the late fifth and early sixth centuries is little *but* the story of imperial counter-action. Time and again we hear of troops being used to quell them both in Antioch and Constantinople. The difference in treatment must in large measure have been due to the fact that the *cliques* were of uncertain and even shifting composition. If a new governor had to be warned of

¹ Liebeschuetz, p. 218.

² p. 213.

their existence, so skilfully could they disperse themselves in a theatre audience, then it is not likely that troops could single them out in a riot. Even Libanius, for all his anxiety about the activity of the *claque*, had to confess that ordinary police methods were unlikely to prove effective.¹ His suggestion made in 388 that all foreign residents and those without a house, family, or craft in the city be expelled, bears out his earlier and more general claim that *claqueurs* were mainly outsiders.² This is of course a very common accusation against troublemakers of all sorts at all times,³ but it is in itself eminently plausible that *claqueurs* should drift, like the modern *groupie*,⁴ in the wake of their favourite pantomimes as they toured from city to city (hence of course the occasional expulsion of the pantomimes themselves).

Blue and Green Clagues

What more could have been asked, then, than that these shadowy but troublesome figures should suddenly appear conspicuously decked out in Blue and Green jackets—and (more-over) sitting all together like other groups and associations at the theatre (as we can still see from the inscribed seats at Aphrodisias and Miletus)?

It is difficult to believe that this was not the intention (or at least the hope) of the authorities who engineered the amalgamation. Of course if they had hoped by this means to prevent the *clagues* misbehaving altogether, they were to be disappointed. By the close of the fifth century the new Blue and Green *claqueurs* were causing more trouble than ever. But there was some gain. The Blues and Greens did not at any rate operate clandestinely;

¹ *Or.* lvi. 22–3.

² *Or.* lvi. 22–3, cf. *Or.* xvi. 33.

³ e.g. for Taine the insurgents who drove Louis XVI from the Tuileries on 10 August 1792 consisted largely of ‘*aventuriers intrépides et féroces de toute provenance, Marseillais et étrangers, Savoyards, Italiens, Espagnols, chassés de leur pays*’ (quite falsely: cf. G. Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (1959), p. 3 and *passim*). Cf. too the disproportionate prominence given by the Press to foreign students during the university troubles of the late 1960s.

⁴ One of the ringleaders in the Riot of the Statues at Antioch in 387 had taken part in a similar popular disturbance at Berytus not long before, according to Libanius, *Or.* xix.28. Rather than see evidence here for ‘community of view . . . between the groups in different cities’ (Browning, *JRS* 1952, p. 18, n.65), it seems more natural just to take him for a wandering *claqueur*. He is explicitly described as one of ‘those who put their dancers above sun, moon, and clouds’.

it was easier to see what they were up to and exercise some control over their excesses. Furthermore, they could now be made officially responsible for the acclamations, giving the authorities a welcome measure of control in an area that had become too important to leave in the irresponsible hands of itinerant and anonymous claqueurs.

If we can only guess at the intentions behind the amalgamation, there are two facts which, when taken together, strongly support the hypothesis here advanced. (1) From their earliest appearance in the Greek cities the Blues and Greens behave (as they never did at Rome) as clagues (we hear constantly of their shouting and chanting, *ἔβόων* and *ἔκραζον*). (2) Within a remarkably short space of time (much shorter than has so far been imagined) they acquired a monopoly of ceremonial acclamations. It is difficult to believe that these two facts are unconnected or coincidental.

The first stage in the development of the ceremonial role of the factions must have been the chanting of imperial acclamations. Now the first such factional acclamations on record date from the early fifth century. All are preserved in what we have already seen to be a remarkably untrustworthy work, the *Parastaseis*. The two earliest, purporting to celebrate Constantine, are best disregarded altogether,¹ and little history can be built on any of the rest; we have seen already that something is badly wrong with the one on the empress Verina (p. 142), and another, alleged to refer to Leo I (457-74), in fact commemorates the building activity of Leo III (c. 740).² Even so, it is difficult to believe that the actual text of the acclamations (all unexceptionable in themselves) was simply invented. For the sixth and early seventh centuries we have rather more, this time from the chronicles and (with an apology for the bad Greek) the historian Theophylact Simocatta.³ But even here all is not quite well. The most famous, the long dialogue about the murdered woodseller, *may* belong in the early stages of the Nika riot, but it makes no sense where it actually occurs in the text of Theophanes.⁴

¹ *Par. Synl. Chron.* 39.1 Preger, ludicrously and all but incredibly confusing Constantine with Porphyrius the charioteer (cf. *Porphyrius*, 109-12).

² *Ibid.*, §3, p. 20; cf. App. D.

³ viii.10.13 (καλὸν γὰρ καὶ τῆς ιδιωτικῆς φωνῆς μνήμην ποιήσασθαι). ⁴ App. C.

There is a simple explanation why so many apparently authentic acclamations should be quoted in a garbled or inexact context. All these writers drew their factional acclamations, not from their main historical source, but from a record of factional acclamations; a work which, not being in any sense a history, gave very little context to assist the reader of a later generation. That such a book existed is beyond question; much of the *Book of Ceremonies* is based on a record of eighth-, ninth- and tenth-century factional acclamations.¹ The evidence here assembled suggests that the practice of recording them started in the fifth century (the earliest acclamation worth taking seriously concerns Theodosius II).²

If true, this is most important. Many of these acclamations are quite nondescript, such as a thousand different bodies must at one time or another have uttered. So the fact that it is the Blue and Green versions that were written down suggests that they were felt to have a special status. They were now the *official* imperial acclamations, and as such were duly and meticulously recorded.

Before the fifth century, as we have seen from Libanius and Eunapius, acclamations seem to have been led by the theatre clagues. As the ceremonial grew in importance something more official and permanent became desirable on many counts, not least the increasing complexity and professionalism of the ceremonial. The two 'chori' that Pacatus describes singing alternating songs in honour of Theodosius I at Emona³ were probably choirs of professional singers rather than clagues in the ordinary sense. Before long we find Blues and Greens performing both functions. The *Book of Ceremonies* preserves a number of factional songs from a rather later period,⁴ but the early appearance of poets and musicians among the faction personnel (p. 260) suggests that the practice goes right back to the sixth century.

It is interesting to note in this connection that antiphonal chanting was the normal method of the clague; Nero's Augustiani were 'divisi in factiones'⁵ as was the Antioch clague.⁶ By this means a crowd could more rapidly and effectively be

¹ For a clear picture of its structure, Bury, *EHR* 1907, 209-27 and 417-39.

² *Par.* 39.1. ³ *Pan. Theod.* 37.3.

⁴ Some quoted by Maas, *BZ* xxi (1912), 37f. ⁵ *Suet., Nero* 20.3.

⁶ Libanius, *Or.* xli. 9, οἱ μὲν τούτῳ συμπράττοντες, οἱ δὲ ἐκείνῳ, i.e. backing rival pantomimes.

worked up to a pitch of partisanship. It is a further proof of the direct descent of the Byzantine Blues and Greens from the theatre *clagues*¹ rather than the true Roman circus colours that antiphonal chanting and singing was their invariable practice—thus giving the pleasing effect of the emperor's subjects vying with each other in his praises. It will be obvious how neatly this method harmonized with the traditional rivalry of the Blues and Greens, sublimated into what Gibbon primly called an 'emulation of servitude'.

The reason why scholars have never seriously thought (despite the evidence) of taking the ceremonial role of the factions back into the sixth century is precisely this rivalry and the violence it bred. They could not (the argument runs) simultaneously be political parties struggling against imperial absolutism *and* the emperor's most servile flatterers. Now we have seen that they are not political parties, the antithesis becomes less clear cut. Even so it might have seemed reasonable to doubt whether those who caused the emperor's guards such trouble could really have sung his praises with the same gusto. Such doubts can be dispelled by a neglected anecdote in John Moschus' *Pratum Spirituale*.² Nothing in the world (as an aged abbot called Marcellus once assured John) so soothes and relaxes the mind as continual reading of the psalms, 'just as with the demes, when one of them is chanting the emperor's praises (τὸν βασιλέα εὐφημῆ), the other takes no offence (οὐ λυπεῖται), whereas once they turn to insults (ὑβρεῖς), then they are aroused'. It follows (a) that already by the beginning of the seventh century the chanting of imperial acclamations sounded like the intoning of the psalms; and (b) that while one faction was performing its part in the antiphony, the other waited quietly for its turn.

Attention has already been drawn to the absurdity of the notion that only the faction that supported an emperor acclaimed him (p. 104); naturally both did. No less absurd is the naïve but prevalent assumption that the respectful protocols of the *Book of Ceremonies* mirror exactly the actual behaviour of the factions in the middle Byzantine period. The Ur-Book of

¹ Pantomimes competed with each other as early as Augustus, and (later) in the agonistic festivals: see L. Robert, *Hermes* 1930, 119f.

² §152, *PG* lxxxvii.3.3020A.

Ceremonies which we have postulated for the fifth to sixth centuries must have contained official protocols no less respectful. Very occasionally less seemly acclamations were substituted (p. 254), but in general (as the acclamations against Ibas show) even protests were normally *preceded* by the appropriate courtesies, if only as a *captatio benevolentiae*. We may compare the curious mixture of tones even in the indignant dialogue between Justinian's Mandator and the Greens. No doubt there were occasional circus riots in the tenth century as in the sixth.¹ The rivalry and violence of the factions in the sixth century has less bearing on their performance of the imperial acclamations than might have been supposed.

We can perhaps recover some hints of the transformation of the theatre claque into Blues and Greens from the theatre seats at Miletus (so far unpublished).² One bench reads *τόπος αὐραρίων Βενέτω(ν)* the 'place of the Blue *aurarii*.' Now *aurarius* has only been known to us hitherto from the grammarians and glossographers, who interpret it 'laudator', 'favior', a supporter.³ Priscian is a little more precise, those 'qui favoribus splendidos, hoc est claros, faciunt',⁴ that is to say, not just supporters in general (everybody in the theatre would be a supporter of one performer or another) but the few professional claqueurs, those who quite literally 'made famous with their applause'. Surely we have discovered the actual Latin (and Greek) word that Libanius so studiously avoids in his slighting references to the claque.

It is now possible to see that the transformed theatre claqueur might more properly or fully be styled, not just 'Blue', but 'Blue claqueur'. Elsewhere in the theatre we find benches marked 'aurarii' *tout court*, 'victorious aurarii' and 'aurarii Philaugusti'.⁵ These latter are presumably those officially deputed to sing the emperor's praises. Unfortunately, there is no means of dating these graffiti at all precisely, nor even of knowing whether they are all contemporary. But in the light of the picture so far drawn it is tempting to date them to a transitional stage, when

¹ See p. 308.

² I am most grateful to Peter Hermann for showing me these inscriptions.

³ Servius, *ad. Aen.* vi.816 and vi.204; *Corp. Gloss. Lat.* v.616.1.

⁴ *Gramm. Lat.* iii.509.33.

⁵ *τόπος αὐραρίω(ν), τόπος ἐπινικίων αὐραρίων, τόπος φιλαγούστων αὐραρίων.*

there were still claqueurs other than Blues and Greens, and Blues and Greens had not yet become the only 'aurarii Phil-augusti'.

The theatre claqueurs had little to lose in accepting the new situation. For while their collective behaviour had its sinister aspect, there was nothing sinister about the individual claqueur, no revolutionary or political agent but for the most part a young drifter who had everything to gain, both financially and in status, by joining the more prestigious Blues and Greens. Claqueurs had been paid by their pantomime, even when he was not performing,¹ and it seems likely therefore (though evidence is lacking) that the new Blues and Greens will have been paid (if they behaved themselves), though like the pantomimes themselves, from state funds now. It would have been the natural way to prevent the independent clagues re-forming, as well as providing a more reliable incentive than mere loyalty for the imperial acclamations. By 602 there was an official list of registered Blues and Greens, 900 Blues and 1,500 Greens; six times larger than Libanius' figure of 400 for the Antioch theatre claque, an increase not disproportionate to the greater size and importance of the hippodrome of Constantinople.

The growth of imperial ceremonial

There can be little doubt that the long reign of Justinian saw a marked acceleration in the growth of imperial ceremonial. It is reflected in some complaints in Procopius' *Secret History*, and (for us) most conspicuously in the art of the period. Corippus' panegyric on Justin II, the year after Justinian's death (566), is largely given up to the description of ceremonial.²

It was under Justinian (it seems) that people first began to *write* about ceremonial. Peter the Patrician was the first man to record the protocols of important occasions for a strictly practical purpose, as a guide for the repetition of such occasions.³

¹ Libanius, *Or.* xli.7.

² See now the full elucidation of this aspect of the poem in Averil Cameron's commentary (London, 1976).

³ To quote his very words, he recorded the coronation protocols *ἵνα ἕκαστος τὸ εὐτακτότερον καὶ ἄρεσκον αὐτῶν, καιροῦ γενομένου (ὅπερ βραδέως ὁ θεὸς ποιήσει—i.e. may Justinian not die just yet) ἐπιλέξῃται* (417.10-12—it is not necessary to correct to *ποιήσοι* with Stein, ii. 728, n.3.

Some important excerpts from Peter's work¹ are preserved (significantly enough) in the *Book of Ceremonies* (i. 84-95), under three headings: promotions (84-6), diplomatic visits (87-90), and imperial coronations (91-5).

Peter's protocols were apparently the earliest Constantine VII's researches on the subject could turn up. Peter himself was able to find information on coronations as far back as Leo I (457), and in his chapters on the reception of foreign embassies he quotes an example from (again) the reign of Leo. No doubt he unearthed this material in the files of his own department; indeed, as master of the offices for an unprecedented period of 26 years, Peter was very much involved in the diplomatic comings and goings of the reign. It may well be that his unique experience and authority played an important part in the systematization of ceremonial at this period.

His interest in protocol and procedure foreshadows the ceremonial books of the eighth century and later. We can in fact make a direct comparison between Peter's chapters on promotion procedures (i. 84-6) and those of Constantine for the tenth century (i. 45f.). In Constantine's protocols, apart from a general development in detail, acclamations from the factions play an official role; in Peter's they are never mentioned. It is also instructive to compare another sixth-century ceremonial description, of Justinian's triumphal entry into Constantinople in 559, with two later such triumphal entries, of Theophilus in 831 and Basil I with his son Constantine² in 879. There are a number of similarities between the three accounts, but once more the factions, prominent in the two later processions, played no official role in the first. This is not to say that Blues and Greens played no part in 559; already in the 390s Libanius specifically mentions the theatre claqueurs waiting at the city gate to greet the incoming governor with the traditional

¹ Very little serious work has been done on this material: see the brief but useful outline in Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii. 728-9.

² *De Caes.* 497.13f. (Justinian, as dated by Stein, ii. 818-19), 498.16f. (Basil—precisely datable to the end of August, since Constantine died suddenly on 3 September; cf. R. J. H. Jenkins, *DOP* xix (1965), 101), and 503.21f. (Theophilus). I am not happy with Stein's sentimental notion that when Justinian ἤψεν κηροῦς εἰς τὸ μνήμα τῆς δεσποίνης (497.19), this refers to the tomb of Theodora rather than to the Virgin (though μνήμα is slightly puzzling). Basil lit candles in a church of the Virgin (499.7).

acclamations,¹ and it is likely enough that Blue and Green claqueurs were among the deputation that greeted Justinian at the gates of Constantinople. But their role cannot yet have been recognized as an official element in the protocol.

It would be natural if to start with the official contribution of the Blues and Greens had been confined to the public appearances of the emperor at the circus and theatre. But, like the claqueurs of Antioch, they no doubt regularly took part in the loyal acclamations delivered at other imperial appearances, during processions to and from the palace and the churches. Sooner or later their contribution here too came to be felt so essential a part of the occasion that it was recognized as such and registered in the official protocols. This was to happen before the end of the sixth century. The evidence is unmistakable, though it has been overlooked or misinterpreted by scholars preoccupied with the political activity of the factions. It will not in practice be possible to keep 'political' interpretations out of the discussion, since (as we shall see) much of what has been claimed as political behaviour in fact stems directly from their ceremonial role.

The ceremonial role of the Blues and Greens

For a particularly clear example of this we may begin with the day after the deposition of Maurice and the proclamation of Phocas (to which we shall return) by the Greens.² The day after his own coronation it was normal for a new emperor to crown his empress, and the Blues and Greens duly presented themselves at the palace to perform what was evidently already their traditional ceremonial duty to greet the new empress as she emerged to make for Saint Sophia, at each of a predetermined series of stations along the route (we are amply informed about these stations, each reserved for just one of the two colours, from the meticulous itineraries of the *Book of Ceremonies*). On this occasion a quarrel broke out between the Blues and Greens as to who should occupy a particular station, the one directly in

¹ οἱ μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ ταῖς εὐφημίαις οὗτοι τεταγμένοι . . . ἀπήντησαν (the technical term: cf. S. MacCormack, *Historia* 1972, 724) τε καὶ τὸν εἰωθότα κατειλήφεσαν τόπον (*Or.* lvi.2). The 'usual place' foreshadows the fixed stations of the factions at Constantinople (Guilland, *Études topogr.* i (1969), 217f.).

² Simocatta, viii. 10.9f.

front of the palace, where the imperial party would presumably make its first stop. Eventually an aide of Phocas appeared on the scene, and tried to settle the dispute by roughly pushing the Blue demarch out of the way. Shocked at such behaviour, and at the injustice of their treatment, the Blues chanted one of their characteristic utterances:

*ὕπαγε, μάθε τὴν κατάστασιν
ὁ Μαυρίκιος οὐκ ἀπέθανεν.*

Phocas took the hint. He had the unfortunate Maurice executed the very next day, together with his five sons. But what exactly did the Blues mean? They are usually assumed to have been making a seditious threat: 'Attention! comprends donc la situation: Maurice n'est pas encore mort!'¹ This 'situation', on the 'political' interpretation, is that, although the Greens put Phocas on the throne, while Maurice still lives the Blues might put him back again. Or for those who cannot accept that the Blues could even contemplate backing the 'Green' Maurice, the Blues are held to be threatening that maybe the Greens will switch back from Phocas to Maurice again.² That is to say, all is seen in terms of the colours backing candidates in political alliance.

It is more than doubtful whether the Greek can bear such tortuous innuendoes. *ὕπαγε* does not mean 'attention'; it is standard colloquial Greek for 'go away'. And if the 'situation' is the fact that Maurice is still alive, then to tell Phocas to 'learn about' this seems needlessly provocative. In such a context what else can *κατάστασις* mean but its standard specialized Byzantine meaning, 'ceremonial'?³ All the Blues are saying is 'go and learn the ceremonial'. This is confirmed by the two variants transmitted in the chronicle tradition, *μάθε τὴν ἀληθείαν* for the first line and *ὁ Μαυρίκιος ἐρωτηθήτω* for the second; 'learn the truth' and 'let Maurice be asked'—in both cases about the ceremonial.⁴ Not a threat of support for Maurice, simply a taunt at Phocas' ignorance. Phocas had been a centurion in the army a few days previously, and was doubt-

¹ Janssens, *Byz.* 1936, 510.

² *Ibid.* 512-13.

³ As seen by F. Dölger, *BZ* 1937, 543 and 1938, 527.

⁴ See Maas, *BZ* xxi (1912), 35, §iv.1. These 'variants' may in fact all be original; that is to say all may have been chanted in succession (*μάθε τὴν ἀληθείαν* goes back to the contemporary John of Antioch, fr. 108, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 149.7).

less quite unfamiliar with the niceties of court ceremonial. The Blues are merely hinting that Phocas would do well to ask his predecessor how to do the job properly. Phocas' reaction (as usual) was out of all proportion to the provocation.

So the Blues and Greens scarcely emerge from the affair as the formidable political parties they are usually represented at this time. Indeed, the very day after their role in his proclamation we find the Greens with apparently no more substantial a claim on Phocas' gratitude than that they should be given preference over the Blues in singing a song to his wife. It is also instructive that the only reply the Blues felt it necessary to make was that the Greens' claim was 'intolerable' and 'unprecedented' (*ξέρον*).¹ Whether or not the Greens did get their way on this occasion, there can be no doubt (as Simocatta implies) that the Blues were in the right. As late as the tenth century the station nearest the palace was still reserved for the Blues,² and the Blue protest in 602 suggests that it was already then a long-established custom.

It is interesting to note the implication that, whatever his preferences or their services to him, it was improper for an emperor to permit such a change in the ceremonial arrangements of the factions.

It is notorious that the factions caused a lot of trouble during the reign of Phocas, but more of it than is usually realized stemmed directly from his crass and cavalier attitude to ceremonial. In 607 he married his daughter Domentzia to Priscus, count of the excubitors, which was effectively to nominate him heir apparent. At the next circus games, the demarchs of the two factions had portraits of Priscus and Domentzia placed together with those of Phocas and Leontia. Phocas, furiously leaping to the conclusion that the factions and Priscus were plotting against him, threatened to behead the demarchs on the spot. They replied that their 'grammistai' (relatively junior officials) had done it 'according to custom'. The grammistai assured Phocas that they had acted on their own initiative.³ Once again, it looks as if the ignorant and suspicious emperor misunderstood a regular and innocent piece of ceremonial.

Two years later, one day in 609, when the factions had long

¹ Simocatta viii.10.10.

² See p. 254, n.2.

³ Jo. Ant., fr. 109, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 149; Theophanes, p. 294.11f.

been calling out to him their ritual cry 'Rise, Phocas' (*ἀνατεῖλον, Φῶκα*), he finally staggered into the Kathisma the worse for drink. In disgust the Greens burst out into an impromptu perversion of their solemn greeting (in its proper form well known from the tenth century):

At the bottle again,
it's befuddled your brain!

In a drunken rage Phocas ordered brutal reprisals, setting off a chain reaction of violence from the Greens.¹

All three incidents strongly bear out the analogy of the abbot Marcellus. Despite their bitter rivalry and occasional violence, the factions took their ceremonial very seriously—far more seriously (in this case) than the emperor himself. Their fulsome acclamations might sound 'servile' to the modern ear, but for contemporaries the imperial ceremonial had a dignity of its own, a dignity that the emperor no less than the factions was bound to respect.

The dispute over the Blue station outside the palace reveals the factions playing what is quite clearly an officially recognized part in the coronation of an empress *outside* the hippodrome. Indeed, the mention of one station surely implies all the rest;² the practice of the emperor being greeted alternately by Blues and Greens at a series of fixed stations during ceremonial processions through the city must have been well established as early as 602.

To Simocatta we owe another striking example of this. Three times during his description of the marriage of Maurice in 582 he mentions the factions participating in a ceremony which took place actually in the bridal chamber in the palace itself. To start with, the bride (Tiberius' daughter Constantina) sat on a special veiled throne so that the demes could not see her; later she rose and the demes sang the wedding song (*ἀνέκραγον . . . ὑμέναιον*); and finally the official who gave her away toasted the happy pair 'in full view of the demes'.³ It seems clear

¹ Theophanes, p. 296.25f., and Jo. Ant. fr. 109 again.

² This first station outside the palace is called *Ἀμπέλιον* by Simocatta, *οἱ λύχνοι* ('The Lamps') by Constantine VII; cf. Guiland, *Études topogr.* i.225 and Mango, *The Brazen House* (1959), 83.

³ Simocatta i. 10.7-9.

that they played a major and carefully regulated part in the ceremony.

We do not happen to have an exact analogue for this part of an imperial wedding in the *Book of Ceremonies*, but § ii.21 provides an interesting commentary on the naming (or renaming) of members of the imperial family by the Blues and Greens, of which no fewer than three cases are known from the sixth century. The renaming of Justin I's wife in 518; the renaming of Tiberius II's wife in 578; and the naming of Maurice's first-born son in 583.¹ According to the *Book of Ceremonies*, on the third day after the birth of a son to a reigning emperor two receptions of the factions are to be held at their 'phialae' (courtyards), at which they ask, 'in traditional fashion', for a special race-meeting the following day. At this meeting 50 men from the guards regiments (τάγματα), 50 each from the two demes (that is to say 50 Blues and 50 Greens) and 50 ordinary citizens (πολίται) are to be appointed to meet again in the same place the following day and 'in accordance with the old established rite and ancient custom' to proclaim a name for the new-born Porphyrogenitus. On the eighth day the infant is duly christened with the name 'proclaimed by the demes'.

It does not of course follow that this very procedure was used as early as 583, but it was evidently felt to be very ancient. In addition to the heavy emphasis on 'established rite and ancient custom' there is the crudely 'up-dating' interpolation after the mention of the phialae: 'but since these have long since been abolished', the receptions are now to be held elsewhere. They were abolished by Basil I (867-886), so even in its present form the ceremonial goes back to some time between then and their creation by Justinian II *c.* 694. Before then, according to the *Patria*, the factions held their 'dances' in the Tribunal,² 'up to Heraclius' (610-41). Apparently, then, ceremonial dances by the factions took place in the palace area *before* Heraclius.

Unfortunately, none of our three sixth-century naming ceremonies is precisely located. The fact that the riot over the

¹ See p. 143f. The renaming of Heraclius son of Constantine III (known to history as Constans II) as Constantine at his coronation in 641 was done much less formally (Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* ii (1972), 193-4).

² p. 168 Preger. Jarry absurdly takes these dances to be 'exhibitions de funambules' which Heraclius banned to punish the factions (*Hér. et factions*, 512).

renaming of Tiberius' wife took place outside Saint Sophia is not necessarily inconsistent with a procedure on the lines of *De Caer.* ii. 21. The riot itself was a final protest (presumably by the colour whose name had been rejected) on the day when the empress was formally rechristened in the cathedral.

We have seen already that political interpretations have been suggested for the names put forward by the factions on each of these occasions. They were not convincing (p. 145), nor is it easy on any political interpretation to explain why the factions should (a) have wanted and (b) made such a fuss about something so seemingly unimportant. We can hardly suppose that this was a right that the people extracted from the emperor; rather it was something the emperor allowed them precisely because it was not important, to foster the illusion that the people were consulted over matters concerning their imperial family. For obvious practical reasons he could not allow an entire circus audience *carte blanche*; they had to have spokesmen—and who better than his own constituted spokesmen of the people, the Blues and Greens, who could be warned that they must not propose unsuitable or provocative names.¹ That is to say, the Blues and Greens were acting out a ceremonial role; this is why their disputes over this or that name (when both were safe dynastic names like Justinian or Theodosius) could be allowed to generate such heat; their rivalry, as so often, was confined to each other.

There are some interesting further examples of the factions participating in imperial ceremonial under Heraclius. The Paschal Chronicle refers briefly to their role in the coronation of Heraclius' eldest son Constantine in 612 or 613.² Then we have from the *Book of Ceremonies* (ii. 27) a description of the part they played in 638 (together with the *signa* and *scholae*) at the ceremony of the promotion of Heraclius junior from Caesar to Augustus and his brother David to Caesar in the Daphne palace. Fine, on the look out for 'political' activity from the factions, dismisses this as 'purely ceremonial'³ without finding

¹ By the tenth century (and no doubt earlier) they were actually told which names to propose (*καὶ ἐκφωνήσατε τὸδε ὄνομα τῷ τεχθέντι πορφυρογεννήτῳ*, 617.17).

² *Chron. Pasch.* p. 704.1 (on the date, Stratos, *Byz. in the Seventh Century* i (1968), 95).

³ *Zbornik Rad. Viz Inst.* 1967, 34.

it at all remarkable that they acted out their part, not in the hippodrome, but in the cathedral of Saint Sophia. This was certainly an innovation, since we happen to be precisely informed about the location of all late fifth- and sixth-century coronations. On the other hand, as can be seen from *De Caer.* i.38b (with an elaborate account of the role of the factions), it was later to become normal for a reigning emperor to crown his son co-emperor in Saint Sophia. The existing protocol was perhaps designed for Michael III,¹ but in its broad outline might go right back to this occasion.

Most interesting of all is the occasion c. 623 when Heraclius took with him a number of groups, including partisans of both colours, for his rendezvous with the Khagan of the Avars at Heraclea.² Some scholars (as we have seen) assume that they went in their capacity as 'home guard'. But even on the most favourable view of the factions as defenders of Constantinople, it is hardly credible that Heraclius took them to protect him against the Avars. Fine rightly points out that Heraclius was planning to hold races at Heraclea, but even so it is a false antithesis to call their role on this occasion 'sportive rather than political'.³ The purpose of Heraclius' visit is well put by Stratos:⁴ having no army in the Balkans to make a show of strength, he was anxious to impress the Avars 'with his kingly majesty, by holding horse-races and magnificent spectacles'. Stratos himself goes on to include the 'demes' in Heraclius' *military* retinue. The truth is surely that their role on this occasion was not military, political, or even sportive (the partisans were not responsible for the actual racing); they went because chariot racing was unthinkable without their contribution on the ceremonial side. It was for the splendid acclamations and dances that Heraclius needed them. The importance of what he calls τὸ θεατρικόν on important occasions is firmly underlined by the author of the mid-sixth-century *De Re Strategica* (p. 81). The ever more intricate and overpowering ceremonial both of his court and his public appearances was long to remain the principal means the Byzantine emperor employed to cow foreign visitors into a proper appreciation of his own magnificence and invincibility. This is why Justinian was particularly infuriated

¹ Vogt, *Comm.* ii (1940), 2f.

² *Chron. Pasch.* p. 712.15f. cf. p. 47.

³ *Op. cit.* p. 35.

⁴ *Byz. in the Seventh Century* i (1968), 147.

by a circus protest in 556, when he was trying to impress a Persian ambassador.¹

It will be seen that all the examples so far discussed of the partisans playing what must be reckoned a prescribed ceremonial role date from the late sixth or early seventh century. There are in fact good reasons for inferring a major development in and formalization of imperial ceremonial in general and factional participation therein in particular at just about this time; I refer to the suggestion briefly made in Ch. II that the faction hierarchy was not a spontaneous growth within the factions, but an official creation, much as we know it from Philotheus and the *Book of Ceremonies*, of the late sixth century.

The faction hierarchy

The demarch, its head, is not attested before 602. If nothing else the Greek word suggests a new Byzantine rather than a traditional Roman title, and it is interesting to note that in Simocatta's day it seems not yet to have caught on with the masses, who called them dioecetai (διοικηταί).² This is borne out by an actual acclamation of 602 preserved by Theophanes, and by a passage in the *Paschal Chronicle* (which dates from the reign of Heraclius.)³

The fact that demarchs are not mentioned before 602 is set in sharper relief by their frequent appearance in both the chronicles and other sources thereafter. The two demarchs of 602 feature prominently in the events of that year, as does the new Green demarch John Crucis in the following year. The degree to which their role could be taken for granted is illustrated by the reference in the *Doctrina Jacobi* (written 634) to the activities of 'the Greens under Crucis'.⁴ Compare too John of Nikiu's account of the Arab invasion of Egypt in 640: 'And Menas, who was chief of the Green Faction, and Cosmas the son of Samuel, the leader of the Blues, besieged the city of Misr'.⁵

Now illuminating though this information on faction activity under Phocas and Heraclius is, it cannot compare for fullness

¹ Malalas, p. 488; Theophanes, p. 230.20. Peter the Patrician devoted a great deal of trouble to the protocol for dealing with a Persian ambassador (*De Caer.* 398-408).

² viii.7.10.

³ Theophanes, p. 237.15f. and *Chron. Pasch.* p. 696.1.

⁴ *Doctr. Jacobi*, p. 39 Bonwetsch.

⁵ *Chron.*, §98.3, p. 187 Charles.

with the regular year-by-year entries in the chronicles of John Malalas, John of Antioch, and (deriving from a fuller text of both Johns than we now possess) Theophanes for the century from Zeno to Justinian. Yet not only do we never hear of demarchs during all this period. There is no reference by any name or title to any sort of leader of either faction. With the sole exception of the Antioch riot of 507, where the instigator was the charioteer Porphyrius, all these sources write invariably of just the Blues or the Greens (*δῆμοι, μέρη*, etc.).

By the tenth century the demarchs were appointed by the emperor, and the probability is that they always had been. An acclamation preserved by Theophanes begs Maurice to appoint John Crucis demarch of the Greens—or at least it does when correctly punctuated.¹ The Emperor may have hoped that by creating such an official he would be able to exercise more control over the factions. And if the demarchs were likely to be held responsible for their factions (p. 23) they would certainly have had an incentive to curb at least their more irresponsible displays of violence. Yet if this had been intended as the demarch's sole or even main function, then the innovation was only a very qualified success, since the first demarchs on record betrayed Maurice to Phocas—and then defied Phocas.

Once the true nature of the Blues and Greens has been recognized, the answer is plain. For its efficient operation a *claque* depends entirely on the guidance of an experienced *chef*,² and the Blues and Greens, who had by now developed far beyond an orthodox *claque* into a virtual choir, must sooner or later have come to need a formal conductor. In the tenth century the role of the demarch was unquestionably to lead his fellows as conductor,³ and we have just seen that the earliest demarchs on record assembled their factions outside Phocas' palace in order to perform a ceremonial song. It was likewise over a piece of ceremonial that Phocas took the demarchs of 609 to task.

This is not at all to say that the demarch was a musician pure and simple. When we hear of the factions uttering some

¹ Janssens, *Byz.* 1936, 504.

² Compare Tacitus' account of the power of the ex-*claque* leader Percennius with Wechsberg on the dependence of the Vienna *claque* on the ex-soldier Schostal.

³ E. Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (1949), 92.

impromptu insult instead of the expected eulogy, it was presumably the demarch, standing in front of his choir, who was able to prompt and co-ordinate such variations on the set pattern.¹ Hence his prominent role in factional rivalry.

Of the other dignitaries in Philotheus' list, the melistes is the first to appear, in 562; already a regular post of some consequence, it seems, since the man is mentioned in company with some important people as an 'ex-melistes' (ἀπὸ μελιστῶν).² As a musician he will naturally have been concerned with the ceremonial side of faction activities, as too the poet, first attested early in the seventh century.³ The grammistai mentioned in 607 look as if they ought to be clerks or secretaries but are only on record in connection with the exhibition of imperial portraits, once more a piece of ceremonial.⁴ There are no grammistai in Philotheus, but there are the similarly clerical sounding titles *chartularii* and *notarii*; as with the demarch, the new terminology may not have settled down yet. In Simocatta we also find, active in 602, an inner group determining faction policy styled 'the leaders (οἱ κορυφαιότεροι) of the deme',⁵ a vague title which corresponds rather well to the equally vague 'the leadership' (τὰ πρωτεῖα) in Philotheus.

Earlier scholars have tended to take it for granted that the demarchs and their teams always existed. Officials of some sort there must have been in earlier times, naturally enough (p. 20). But I would suggest that the convergence of evidence and arguments from various quarters points strongly to the conclusion that the whole hierarchy as we know it is a single, official creation, to be dated not long before its individual members are first attested. And everything points to the reason for its creation

¹ App. C, p. 331.

² Theophanes, p. 237.17 and Malalas, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 173.33, who calls the man ὁ κατὰ Μελτιάδην ὁ μελιστής, i.e. 'in the house of Meltiades' (see my paper in *Glotta* 1976). Oddly enough μελιστής was translated *monetarius* in the Bonn ed. version, and so appears as a mint official in modern works. The truth was seen by D. Tabachovitz, *Sprachliche und Textkritische Studien zur Chronik des Theophanes Confessor* (1926), 28-9.

³ See p. 88; apparently an elective office, cf. Theodoros Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte* (ed. W. Hörandner, 1974), xxx.31, with p. 79.

⁴ Theophanes, p. 294.20; Jo. Ant., *Exc. de Insid.* p. 149.12.

⁵ viii.9.15 (changed to οἱ ἐπισημότεροι by Theophanes, p. 289.6). These are presumably οἱ ἐπισημότεροι τοῦ δήμου whose presence Simocatta records at the coronation inside the palace of Maurice in 582 (i.1.2) senior representatives of the factions.

being an expansion or perhaps rather formalization of their expanding role in imperial ceremonial. As was fitting, they were appointed and no doubt already, as in the tenth century, paid directly by the emperor.

Imperial coronations

Perhaps the most intriguing and certainly the most misunderstood aspect of factional activity is their role at imperial coronations. It is usually described in modern works as the 'making and unmaking of emperors', the clearest possible proof (so it is claimed) that the factions were indeed omnipotent political parties. Naturally it is here above all that it has been held significant which colour supported which emperor, with much loose talk of 'Blue régimes', 'Green discontent', 'Blue coups', 'Green counter-coups', and the like, linked to different economic and religious policies.¹

A great stir was caused in Byzantine studies a quarter of a century ago by the discovery of two chronicle entries mentioning the Blues and Greens respectively in connection with the proclamations of Leontius (695) and Tiberius III Apsimar (698). Unexpected but unquestionable proof, so it was claimed, that the political activity of the factions did not cease under Heraclius (as had generally been supposed), but continued into at least the eighth century. No attempt was made to explain how this extension of the political role of the factions into a period when on any hypothesis they certainly dominated imperial ceremonial was to be reconciled with the hypothesis that ceremonial *succeeded* political role. On that hypothesis, indeed, no explanation is possible; on mine none is necessary.

This is simply the clearest and most striking illustration of ceremonial turning into politics. The mistake that previous inquiries have made is to assume that the factions were responsible for the actual coup that raised the usurper to the throne; that is to say that he was in almost the modern sense their candidate, representing their policies and interests. The truth is that their contribution was restricted to the *proclamation* of the new emperor.

This too was a new development of the late fifth century. No emperor before then, whatever pains he took to appear the

¹ Such phrases occur *passim* in the writings of Grégoire and Jarry in particular.

civilis princeps, had formally deferred to popular approbation before considering himself legally constituted emperor. There was one occasion when the people assembled in the hippodrome to repudiate an emperor proclaimed by the praetorians, Didius Julianus in 193; as we saw (p. 187), their action may well have encouraged the other bids that led to Julianus' rapid fall, but they made no difference to the legality of his claim to the throne, which needed only ratification by the Senate. This was the normal pattern at the fall of a dynasty in the early Empire; proclamation by the military (whether palace guards or provincial army) and subsequent formal recognition by the Senate.

By the late fifth century, for a variety of reasons (the decline of the power of the military, the growth of the bureaucracy, the fact that the emperor came increasingly to spend all his reign amid the pomp and ceremony of his capital), the situation changed. But it is not simply a matter (as has often been assumed) of the people asserting its independence. For it is not the people alone who begin to play a role in the transmission of power, but even more so the Senate.¹

It is no coincidence that it was with the mid fifth century that Peter the Patrician began his coronation accounts. Though many of the elements were traditional, the ceremony as a whole represents a mixture of the civil, military, and religious that is certainly new. We need not here concern ourselves with the perhaps over-legalistically conceived debate about which of these elements was truly 'constitutive': the raising on the shield and crowning with the military *torques*, the acclamation by army and people, or the coronation with the diadem by the patriarch.² More probably it was the ceremony as a whole that made a man emperor. For our present purpose it is enough that the role of the people was a central (if not invariable) part of the ceremony.

The first of Peter's coronations was that of Leo I,³ which took place in a military setting outside the city and was strongly military in character. The next, that of Anastasius,⁴ while retaining many of the military elements, was staged in the

¹ This development is admirably sketched by H.-G. Beck, *Senat und Volk von Konstantinopel* (Sitz.-Ber. München, 1966).

² Averil Cameron, *comm.* on Corippus, *De Laud. Just. II* (1976), provides a summary of the continuing debate.

³ *De Caer.* i.91.

⁴ *De Caer.* i.92.

hippodrome and will better serve to illustrate the growing but limited part played by the people.

At the death of Zeno (who had left no heir), his widow Ariadne, the senate, and the 'officials' (the senior civil servants) met in the palace to decide on a successor. Meanwhile, the people and soldiers assembled in the hippodrome (which adjoined the palace) and clamoured till Ariadne appeared in the Kathisma, whereupon they demanded an orthodox emperor and the removal of the 'thieving' city prefect. Ariadne reassured them that she had ordered the senate and officials to select a suitable and orthodox emperor, and replaced the city prefect. After further debate behind the scenes Anastasius was chosen. Once Zeno had been buried, the new emperor entered the Kathisma minus diadem, to be raised on the shield and crowned with the *torques*. Next he returned to the palace to be crowned with the diadem, and then came back to the Kathisma, where he greeted 'the people', who replied by acclaiming him Augustus.

The people were prepared to let the senate and officials make the decision, but it had to be a decision they approved of. The proclamation of Justin I in 518¹ follows the same pattern with some interesting refinements—including the earliest definite reference to the factions in this connection.²

This time, while the politicking went on in the palace (conducted by the *magister officiorum* and Justin, then count of the excubitors), the people in the hippodrome next door were acclaiming the senate, appealing directly to them for a new emperor. While the debate continued, some excubitors³ actually proclaimed a tribune called John; they got as far as raising him on the shield, but the Blues disapproved and threw stones at him. John's chances had never been strong; he was not the senatorial nominee the crowd had been expecting and he had not even been able to persuade the chamberlains to give

¹ *De Caer.* i.93.

² i.92, p. 423.10, εὐφημήθη παρὰ τῶν στρατιωτῶν καὶ τῶν δημοτῶν looks like a reference to the factions at Anastasius' coronation. But cf. p. 428.16, where all agree on Justin, καὶ συγκλητικῶν καὶ στρατιωτῶν καὶ δημοτῶν . . . καὶ συνήνεσαν ἐπ' αὐτῷ καὶ Βένετοι καὶ Πράσινοι, where the δημοτῶν can hardly be the factions, who are not mentioned till the next clause. δημοτῶν here (and presumably in 423.10) must mean ordinary citizens as opposed to senators and soldiers.

³ Presumably not on Justin's orders (John was in fact a friend of Justin's, cf. p. 427.15), though at this stage Justin himself was probably not yet a candidate.

him the imperial vestments. The excubitors salved their pride by killing a few Blues, but quietly abandoned the unhappy John.

Eventually the senate (and chamberlains) settled on Justin, and since the Blues and Greens agreed too,¹ he ascended into the Kathisma and all followed as for Anastasius.

Justin himself was very much a last-minute compromise candidate, but it is easy to see why he was accepted in the hippodrome. He had the authority of the senate behind him, the correct robes to wear, the patriarch visibly at hand to crown him—and he had taken the precaution of avoiding the embarrassing fate of John by checking *in advance* with the Blues and Greens.

Here at least it is possible to arrive at a fairly exact definition of the contribution of the factions. Not in any sense political parties pulling the strings behind the scenes, since Peter's very full account details all those who played any part in the actual selection of the emperor: the senate, the officials, the scholae, and the excubitors. All that the Blues and Greens did when Justin was finally raised on the shield was what they had conspicuously refused to do for John: utter the necessary loyal acclamations acknowledging him as emperor.

And they did this, not in virtue of any special power they possessed, but simply and solely because it was their normal function to lead the people in ceremonial acclamations at circus and theatre. Normally, of course, the presence of a small trained body to lead the acclamations merely ensured that they were well done. But when those acclamations were destined to constitute recognition of a new emperor, then the body that had the power to lead (or withhold) them became potentially important.

Of course when the power was transmitted peacefully or only shared, that is to say when a reigning emperor crowned his son or some other popular or obvious successor in his own lifetime (the normal practice whenever possible), the approval of the factions will have been purely formal. Their potential power only became actual when there was any question about who was to be crowned. And even then it was only a very short-lived importance they enjoyed, vanishing the moment they had

¹ συνέησαν . . . καὶ Βένετοι καὶ Πράσινοι (428.17).

played their part. But while it lasted, like the Antioch claque and for the same reason, they could expect to be courted and bribed by rival candidates.

The next occasion when the throne fell vacant was at Justinian's death in 565. Justinian himself having indicated no preference between the two obvious candidates, both called Justin, the senate and officials promptly crowned the one who happened to be on the spot, *inside* the palace. It was not till Justin II appeared ready crowned in the Kathisma that the Blues and Greens duly greeted him with acclamations, songs, and even dances.¹ Under the circumstances it is hard to doubt that they had been sounded in advance.

The circumstances of Phocas' accession in 602 are rather more complex.² It began with his proclamation as 'leader' (ἑξάρχος)—not yet emperor—by the Danube army, disgusted by the meanness and mismanagement of Maurice. Their original plan was to offer the throne to Maurice's son Theodosius or Theodosius' father-in-law, a rich senator called Germanus. Maurice got wind of the plot, and after an unsuccessful attempt to arrest the popular Germanus, fled the city accompanied by Theodosius, who remained loyal to him. Naturally enough Germanus now reckoned that the throne was his for the asking. Confident that he had the army behind him he approached the factions.

The Greens debated the matter—and turned him down, on the grounds that he was too partisan a Blue. The only plausible candidate left was now Phocas, and a Green deputation left the city to 'glorify the tyrant with their acclamations' at the suburb of Rhegion, and urged him to move up to the Hebdomon, site of many a coronation in earlier days.

Phocas took the hint and sent to the city, requesting the presence of patriarch, senate and people at the Hebdomon, where he was duly proclaimed emperor and crowned.

It is quite wrong to see this as a Green coup. Phocas was already master of the situation. All the Greens did, all they could do, was to indicate to Phocas that if he decided to seize

¹ Fully described by Corippus, *De Laud. Just.* ii. 310f. For the performance of ceremonial dances by the factions in the hippodrome *ὡς εἰθίσται Πρωμαλοῖς* under Maurice, see Simocatta, iii.6.5.

² Simocatta viii.7.7f. is the principal source.

the supreme power for himself, they would support him rather than Germanus. They could not and did not proclaim him themselves. Indeed, at the ceremony itself he was proclaimed by Blues and Greens *together*.¹ There is no justification for the usual assumption that the Blues were opposed to Phocas; the fact that he was later strongly supported by them (p. 285) suggests that he may actually have been a Blue himself. Similarly there is no need to suppose that Germanus approached the Greens because they were the only party able to play the role of kingmaker. He did not need to negotiate with the Blues because (as the Greens themselves protested) he was a fanatical Blue himself, and so already more than assured of Blue support. Germanus was aiming at what Phocas obtained—proclamation by *both* colours.

It is worth observing how impeccably the entire coup was staged.² Phocas was no doubt just the man to champion the army's grievances, but to have proclaimed him emperor at the start might have rallied loyalist support and endangered the success of the rebellion. Hence the offer to Theodosius and Germanus—and also Phocas' own last-minute offer (tactfully declined) to Germanus before his own coronation; Germanus had to be seen publicly to concede his claim to Phocas. To cap it all, Phocas insisted (an innovation) on being crowned in a church. The Greens certainly played an important part, but it is the wildest exaggeration to say that they 'offered Phocas the throne'. In the last analysis they had only acclamations to offer. If they were quicker off the mark than the Blues in selling their wares to Phocas, this is because they hoped (as their conduct on the next day shows) to steal a march on their rivals in the new emperor's favour.³ Even in this they were to be disappointed, since we soon find Phocas treating them with unprecedented ferocity. It is not easy to believe that men who rejected Germanus' overtures solely because he happened to be a Blue had

¹ Clearly stated by the contemporary John of Antioch (*προσερρήθησαν οὖν καὶ τὰ β' μέρη, Πράσινοι καὶ Βένετοι, καὶ πάντες, καὶ ἀνήγαγον τὸν Φωκᾶν εἰς σκουτᾶριν* [shield] *ἐν τῷ τριβουναλίῳ τοῦ κάμπου καὶ ἀνηγόρευσαν αὐτὸν βασιλέα, Exc. de Insid.* p. 148.24-6).

² I cannot agree with Stratos (*Byz. in the Seventh Century* i (1968), 50) that 'There is something strangely inconsistent about the whole question of Phocas' proclamation'.

³ See pp. 251f.

the profound (but apparently very temporary) reasons modern scholars have supposed for turning to Phocas.

Let us now move forward a century, to Leontius and Tiberius III Apsimar. Leontius was a veteran general of Justinian II, suspicious of his new assignment, who saw his only chance of survival in a bid for the throne. Banking on the unpopularity of Justinian and the element of surprise, he had rumours spread that Justinian was planning a massacre and summoned the people to Saint Sophia, where he was crowned emperor by the patriarch Callinicus. Thus far our main sources, Theophanes¹ and Nicephorus.² George the monk, however, offers the additional scrap of information that Leontius 'was proclaimed emperor at night by the deme of the Blues'.³

A recent study virtually accuses Nicephorus and Theophanes of deliberately suppressing what is held to be a quite different version.⁴ In fact there is no discrepancy at all between the two accounts. The factions always took part in imperial coronations. The only noteworthy feature in this case is that it was the Blues alone who proclaimed Leontius. Presumably he could not persuade the Greens as well—at least not in time for his surprise midnight coronation.

ἀναγορεύεται, the word George uses, means simply 'proclaimed', not 'raised to the throne' as one modern work loosely renders it.⁵ According to the same modern work, Leontius' successor Apsimar seized Constantinople 'thanks to the city militia belonging to the faction of the Greens'.⁶ Once more, our

¹ p. 368.15f. de Boor.

² *Brev.* p. 37.24f. de Boor.

³ That is the genuine George the monk of de Boor's edition, ii (1904), p. 731.17 (*στασιάσας Λεόντιος ὁ πατρικίος ἀναγορεύεται νυκτὸς ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου τῶν Βενέτων βασιλεύς*). The passage was first quoted by M. Lcvčenko, *Viz. Vrem.* xxvi (1947), 182. It has in fact long been available in Glycas (p. 517.13) and Leo Gramm. (p. 165) says that Leontius was proclaimed in the hippodrome.

⁴ "Thus far the chroniclers' narratives of Leontius' *coup* are disarmingly straightforward', 'The demes were far more active than either Theophanes or Nicephorus is willing to admit', Constance Head, *Justinian II of Byzantium* (1972), 94, 53, n.4. The truth is that Theophanes and Nicephorus had a better sense of proportion than Malalas and John of Antioch and judged such details unimportant; note, however, that both do mention the hippodrome scene.

⁵ G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*² (1968), 140. So too in George's account (p. 628.17; cf. Cedrenus i.647.12) of the proclamation of Hypatius in 532.

⁶ Ostrogorsky, p. 141; cf. M. MacClagan, *The City of Constantinople* (1968), 80, where we read that Leontius was 'a creature of the Blues', though at the first opportunity 'the Greens expelled him and brought in an emperor of their own'!

only source (an anonymous chronicle)¹ says merely that 'Apsimar was proclaimed (ἀνγγορεύθη) by the Greens, crowned by the patriarch Callinicus'. The reference to the role of the patriarch clearly shows that the chronicler is not at all concerned here with the political background to the coup; he is simply describing the actual coronation ceremony, the (to the Byzantine) all important moment when Apsimar became emperor. Like Leontius, Apsimar was crowned by the patriarch Callinicus after being proclaimed by one of the factions.

Leontius may have been a Blue and Apsimar a Green, but it is unlikely that there was any deeper reason why either faction supported either emperor. Nor does it follow from the Blue support for Leontius that Justinian II against whom he rebelled was a Green² (a 'Blue' rebellion against a 'Green' government).

Against this background we may perhaps be better able to understand an abortive plot at the accession of Tiberius II in 578, unfortunately known to us only from a garbled account in Gregory of Tours.³ Though Tiberius had been formally crowned for a week when Justin II died on 5 October, he had not yet made his crucial first public appearance as Augustus.⁴ After Justin's funeral the people waited in the hippodrome for Tiberius to greet them according to what Gregory rightly calls 'the custom of the place'. But Tiberius did not go to the hippodrome, having discovered that an 'ambush' was being laid there for him by a grandnephew of Justinian I called Justinian.⁵

¹ F. Cumont, *Chroniques byzantines du manuscrit 1137b* (Anecdota Bruxellensia i, 1894), p. 30, first quoted by A. Maricq, *BARB* xxxv (1949), 66f.

² On the other hand the fact that he is known to have built a Phiale (courtyard) for the Blues does not prove him a Blue either. As Guillard saw, it is likely that the Green Phiale was built at the same time (*Études topogr.* i (1969), 211). Jarry (*Hér. et factions*, 534-9) devotes several pages of fantasy to the supposed 'factional politics' behind these successive coups.

³ *Hist. Franc.* v.30 (= Paul Diac., *Hist. Lomb.* iii.11-12). This chapter contains so many plausible and circumstantial details that it must surely (not necessarily directly) derive from a Byzantine source (some phrases would go very easily into chronicle Greek): Averil Cameron, *JTS* xxvi (1975), 425-6.

⁴ He had in fact been proclaimed Caesar and adopted publicly in the hippodrome in 574: Theophanes, p. 247.28.

⁵ cf. E. Stein, *PW Iustinianus* 2, x.2.1310-13 (accepting Gregory's account in all essentials). Gregory's statement that the dowager empress Sophia was behind another such plot is strongly borne out by our other evidence for jealousy and hostility between Sophia and Tiberius after he had refused to marry her on Justin's death (see Averil Cameron, *Byzantion* xlv (1975), 16f.).

Instead he turned aside into Saint Sophia and then returned to the palace with the patriarch and various dignitaries, where he donned the imperial robes and diadem and 'immensis laudibus imperium confirmavit'. That is to say, he acted out privately in the security of the palace the performance he had been intending to give in the hippodrome. In the hippodrome, meanwhile, the 'factionarii' realised what had happened and dispersed in shame and confusion.

What was this plot? Hardly to depose Tiberius by force. Had the conspirators' aims been as desperate as this, their obvious course would have been to arrest or assassinate him privately beforehand, and then present their own candidate in the hippodrome instead, ready decked out in the purple and diadem. It is tempting to conjecture that the plan was for the factions to begin by acclaiming Tiberius as Augustus in the ordinary way, and then to proclaim the young Justinian *as well*, as *co-Augustus*, or perhaps just Caesar. If the secret had been kept, there would have been no time to stop the acclamations once they had begun. And if they had been well received by the people, Tiberius (who had no heir) might well have felt unable to disavow them.¹ To attempt such a coup Justinian would of course have had to secure the backing of the Blue and Green demarchs. And what else can Gregory's 'factionarii' be but demarchs in Latin dress?² It was a bold plan, to be sure, but one which, unlike a direct assault on the impregnable Kathisma, stood at least some chance of success.

So in no case is there the slightest evidence that the factions were actually responsible for a revolution. The reason they tend to be prominent at times of revolution is quite simply because it was only at the coronation of *usurpers* that their usually formal role as spokesmen of the people at coronations became political.

Yet while their support was as indispensable to the usurper as the co-operation of the patriarch, there is no suggestion that the factions (any more than the patriarch) ever took the initiative

¹ Especially in view of Justinian's imperial pedigree and backing by Sophia.

² All translators and even Stein (*PW* x.2. 1313) translate *factionarii* 'conspirators'. Conspirators they were, to be sure, but that is not at all what the word itself means. In current Byzantine usage it meant 'top charioteer' (see p. 12), but in western glossaries it continues to appear in its original Latin sense 'leader of a faction' (see p. 9). Thus for a westerner *factionarius* would seem the obvious Latin equivalent for *δήμαρχος*. Or does Gregory just mean the factions in general?

in proposing a candidate, much less in starting a revolution. Once a revolution *had* started, naturally they exploited it. But the power they so briefly exercised at such moments was a very special and restricted power, arising directly out of their official role in the actual coronation ceremony. It has nothing to do with their 'political' activity in any wider sense, such as it was. This is why we need not be surprised to find them still doing in the eighth century what they had learned to do in the sixth.

X. Riots and Politics

IT was the all too frequent *riots* of the factions that most impressed—or rather appalled—contemporaries. Modern scholars prefer to write of ‘insurrections’ or ‘demonstrations’, or to talk of the factions ‘inciting’ riots, thereby implying a serious, political motive behind their behaviour. There is in fact abundant and revealing evidence about the true nature of these riots, systematically ignored in modern studies because it implies such a very different interpretation of faction activity in general.

The typology of a faction riot

At the risk of grossly oversimplifying a large subject (which has yet to find its historian)¹ four basic categories of riot (often overlapping, of course) can probably be distinguished in the late empire: economic (mainly corn riots in time of famine); political (usually demonstrations against unpopular taxes or ministers, but occasionally developing into a riot); religious (at Church Councils and episcopal elections, often the work of monks); and what would nowadays be called just hooliganism.

Modern historians, while scrutinizing every last document bearing on the price of corn, have turned up their noses at hooliganism, as a subject unworthy of scholarly study.² It is none the less a serious phenomenon, not confined to one time or place (the student *eversores* of young Augustine’s Carthage are a classic example),³ and not to be explained solely in terms of moral stereotypes. It may be that the soccer hooligan of today and the Blues and Greens of Byzantium can cast mutual illumination on each other.

¹ Martindale’s unpublished ‘Public Disorders’ is a good start, and Evelyne Patlagean’s *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance du IV^e au VII^e siècle* will be a major contribution on the social and economic side.

² See however Stanley Cohen, ‘The politics of vandalism’, *New Society* 12 Dec. 1968, 372-8 and *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1972); also Ian Taylor’s chapter in Cohen (ed.), *Images of Deviance* (1971).

³ *Confess.* iii.3.6.

It was the unanimous verdict of contemporaries that the Blues and Greens fell squarely into this category, together with those other age-old misfits in city life, students.¹

We may begin with Cassiodorus,² who remarks that the factions 'delight to abandon all serious thought' and engage in their 'futile struggles' (*inanes contentiones*) 'as though the safety of the nation were in danger' (*tamquam de statu periclitantis patriae laboretur*). Here is an experienced public servant actually making a joke of the idea that factional rivalry might have a serious basis. Compare from the third century Philostratus' remark³ that 'many cities in Pamphylia and Cilicia were rioting over trifling public shows', adding that it was hard to calm down 'those who had got excited over pantomimes and race-horses'. According to Socrates,⁴ the pogrom at Alexandria in 412 arose 'from no important reason, but because of that inveterate evil in all cities, pantomime-mania'. The same reaction to the same phenomenon down the centuries.

This same emphasis on the frivolity of faction activity is to be found most strikingly expressed in the memoirs of Menander Protector.⁵ It was through boredom with his legal studies that Menander 'put serious things aside' (*τὰ σπουδαῖα παρείς*) and turned to what he bluntly calls 'the disorders (*θόρυβοι*) of the colours' (as though 'disorder' was their main *raison d'être*), which he carefully defines in terms of the races, the pantomime, and wrestling. It is to be noted that he did not think it worth mentioning which colour he supported. With this we may compare the contrast Agathias draws between soldiers and the factions, the factions being described as 'ignoble in all important matters, fierce and brave only for civil disturbances and the strife for the colours',⁶ elsewhere again contrasting such 'pointless disturbances' (*ἄλόγους κινήσεις*) with 'something useful'.⁷ Procopius too⁸ ascribes the rivalry of the factions directly to

¹ On student violence (especially in the fourth century) see the evidence collected in *Cah. d'hist. mondiale* x (1967), 654, in particular the strict regulations for student behaviour laid down in *Cod. Theod.* xiv. 9.1 (of 370), which I forgot to cite there.

² *Variae* iii. 51.11-12.

³ *V. Apoll. Tyan.* 1.15.

⁴ *HE* vii.31. Compare too Cassiodorus, *Var.* i.31.3, restricting pantomime performances 'ut omne semen discordiae funditus amputetur'.

⁵ *Hist. frag.* 1 (= Suidas, s.v. *Μένανδρος*).

⁶ v.14.4.

⁷ v.21.4.

⁸ *BP* i.24.2.

'these names [i.e. of the colours] and the seats which they occupy when they watch the games'. 'They care' he continues, neither for things divine nor human in comparison with conquering in these struggles . . . nay even when they are perhaps ill supplied with the necessities of life and when their fatherland is in the most pressing need and suffering unjustly, they pay no heed if only it is likely to go well with their 'faction' (*μέρος*).¹

Later on, when describing their demand half-way through the Nika revolt for the deposition of John the Cappadocian and Tribonian, he remarks that²

as long as the people were waging this war with each other on behalf of the names of the colours, no attention was paid to the offences of these men against the state; but once the factions had come to this mutual understanding and began the revolt, then they began to abuse them openly throughout the whole city.

The implication is that, except for this unique occasion when they joined forces, the rivalry of Blues and Greens *was* conceived exclusively in terms, not of this or that policy, but of the colours they wore—just like football fans today. It will be remembered (p. 203) that this is exactly how the younger Pliny had characterized the factional rivalry of his day ('suppose half-way through the race that the drivers were to change their colours . . .').

In Ch. V we saw that the Blues and Greens who helped defend Antioch in 540 were described by Procopius as 'those who used to fight each other *in the hippodromes*'.³ At the end of his catalogue of Blue iniquities encouraged by Justinian, Procopius adds contemptuously that his uncle Justin I seemed totally unaware of what was going on, 'although he was an eye-witness at all times of what happened *in the hippodromes*'.⁴ Compare too Procopius' comment on the women who joined the factions (sometimes on the opposite side from their men-folk!), 'although they never even went to the games'.⁵ In each case the implication is that the games themselves were the normal focus of factional activity, even when the trouble subsequently spread to the streets. An epigram from the base to the great Anastasian charioteer Constantine ascribes the

¹ *BP* i.24.5.

² *BP* i.24.17.

³ *BP* ii.8.17.

⁴ *Anecd* viii.2.

⁵ *BP* i.24.6.

'friendly strife of the streets' directly to partisanship for and against Constantine.¹ Nothing had changed since the first and second centuries. Compare Dio Chrysostom's castigation of the hysteria of Alexandrian hippodrome fans:² 'at street corners and in alley-ways the malady continues throughout the entire city for several days'.

Over and above their generally unfavourable attitude to the factions, these texts present a remarkably uniform and consistent picture of the faction riot: it normally took place in or near the hippodrome or theatre, turned on nothing more profound than the colours, and was directly inspired by the excitement of the games themselves.

Now it might fairly be objected that these texts, though contemporary, represent opinions rather than facts—and mostly hostile, upper/middle-class opinions at that. The work of George Rudé has shown that upper-class writers can and all too often do get both the composition and the aims of popular movements completely wrong.³ From the Roman world it will suffice to cite Tacitus and Ammianus, who write so contemptuously of the regrettable tendency of hungry mobs to riot. Is it possible, then, that Blue and Green riots really were genuine protests, misunderstood by the upper/middle-class writers who have come down to us?

There are two decisive objections to such a convenient way of avoiding the natural implications of our evidence. Firstly, we have already seen in Ch. VIII how regularly six centuries of officialdom traced theatrical violence as a matter of course directly to the incitement provided by the performance of the pantomimes, always with the same response: expulsion of dancers and closure of theatres. Whatever other factors may have been involved, it is clear that the diagnosis was correct and the cure effective. The violence itself invariably ceased until the pantomimes were recalled from banishment.

Take the theatre claques of Antioch. Although they came to use their power for political ends, they were in no sense political parties disguised as theatre claques. Like their successors the factions they always remained first and foremost partisans of the

¹ *Anth. Plan.* 364.3-4.

² *Orat.* xxxii.42.

³ See particularly *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (1959) and *The Crowd in History* (1964).

games. Libanius, writing of the problem of restraining their steadily increasing violence, traces it directly to the increasing influence over them of the pantomimes they supported ('the dancers take away their senses', being considerably more powerful than formerly, since they have so many ready to die for them').¹ For a sixth-century illustration we have Porphyrius' role in the great Antioch riot of 507. Particularly significant is the fact that, in an attempt to conciliate the factions early in the Nika revolt, Justinian offered them, not political concessions, but more races.² They refused, but it was not so naïve and irrelevant a proposition at such a moment as moderns would no doubt suppose, for after a serious riot in 520 with much loss of life, the factions assembled in the hippodrome and demanded, not (again) political concessions but—their favourite pantomimes.³ Sixth-century emperors continued to see closure of theatres as the best solution to the problem (p. 226). Anastasius went furthest, and altogether banned both the pantomime and wild beast shows while at the same time increasing the rewards for successful charioteers. There can be little doubt that this was a concerted attempt to reduce factional violence by channelling their rivalry exclusively into the less violence-prone hippodrome. At all events, no faction riots are recorded while the measures remained in operation.⁴

The second objection to dismissing contemporary opinions as biased misrepresentations of faction activity is that these opinions are confirmed in every detail by the accounts of individual riots presented, without comment or interpretation, by the chroniclers.

In the first place, the chroniclers treat faction riots as a category all on their own. In the case of other sorts of riots there is always some indication of the cause or nature of the riots (reference to a famine, or a deposed bishop, for example). With faction riots this was evidently not felt necessary. Everybody knew why they happened. They were the natural escalation and culmination of faction rivalry, nothing more. The standard formula for a faction riot in the chronicles is *δημοτικὴ μάχη* or *συμβολή* (or on one occasion the curious but revealing

¹ *Or.* lvi.23.

² Malalas, p. 474.

³ Malalas, fr. 43, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 170.28f. (cf. *Porphyrius*, pp. 168f.).

⁴ *Porphyrius*, pp. 228f.

technical term, a διμερές), that is to say a battle *between* the factions.¹ At the conclusion of a riot we will sometimes hear that 'the factions were reconciled' (ἐφιλιώθησαν τὰ μέρη).² And when (as usually happened) the imperial guards stepped in, it was to 'separate the factions' (χωρίσαι or παῦσαι τὰ μέρη).³ This, not opposition to imperial policies or defence of democratic rights, is why the factions are so often found in conflict with the guards. As Procopius put it,⁴

They fight against their opponents knowing not for what end they imperil themselves, but knowing well that, even if they overcome their enemy in the fight, the conclusion of the matter for them will be to be carried off straightway to the prison.

When a cause is given, it is seldom anything approaching what might be called political. The release of prisoners was a common issue, (498, 532, 563 in Constantinople)⁵—not political prisoners, but convicted rapists and murderers from their own number. In 514 and 550 riots followed when the emperor cancelled a race meeting.⁶

Vandalism, in the form of incendiarism, was a common and perhaps regular sequel to a faction riot. It is explicitly recorded of riots in 491, 493, 498, 507, 532, 548, 560 (twice at Constantinople and again in Cyzicus), and 561.⁷ Once or twice it is the Praetorium or the house of a prefect that is burned,⁸ but more often the incendiarism is apparently quite indiscriminate, taking in shops, churches, and public baths. The Nika rioters of 532 set fire to much of the city—hardly because they imagined it was going to cause Justinian to give way. Dio records a three-day battle between soldiers and the people some time in the 220s at Rome where it was the soldiers who

¹ Malalas, p. 492. ² Malalas, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 170.28; cf. p. 175.26.

³ Theophanes, p. 236.1; Malalas, p. 491. ⁴ *BP* i.24.3.

⁵ Malalas, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 146.2f.; Mal. 484 with *frag. Tusc.* 4 (*PG* lxxxv.1820) and Theoph. p. 227.6 (where the negative is omitted).

⁶ Jo. Ant. *frag.* 103, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 146; Malalas, *frag. Tusc.* 4 (*PG* lxxxv.1820B) and Theophanes, p. 226.33 (omitting the μή).

⁷ 491–3: Marcellinus, *Chron.* s.a. (with Jo. Ant., *Exc. de Insid.* p. 141); 498: Malalas, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 168.22; 507: Malalas, p. 397 (at Antioch); 532, see below; 548: Malalas, p. 484, Theoph. p. 226.15f.; 560: Malalas, pp. 490–1; 561: Theophanes, pp. 235–6.

⁸ The city prefect's house was always the first to be burned in riots at old Rome; cf. John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364–425* (1974), 20, and add Sidonius, *Epp.* i.10.2.

won by setting fire to buildings ('and so the populace, fearing the whole city would be destroyed, reluctantly came to terms with them').¹ A riot in May 562 began with Blues attacking Greens on the way out from the hippodrome (presumably in a spirit of triumph—or disappointment—after the races; compare the great riot of 507 at Antioch inspired by the victories of Porphyrius²). Some fellow Blues from Sycae then set fire to the docks; contained here they set fire to a nearby church and then made their way to the main boulevard of the Mese, where they set fire to the house of the praetorian prefect and an entire neighbouring colonnade. Such seemingly pointless vandalism is one of the recurring features of hooliganism down the ages, taking the form of smashed telephone boxes and slashed train seats with the soccer hooligan of today. Some light on the spirit in which it was done during a riot of 561 is cast by the accompanying acclamations, soberly committed to paper for posterity by some faction clerk: 'Burn here, burn there, not a Blue anywhere . . .' (p. 91). It is easy to see, then, why one contemporary called the Greens 'citizen-burners' (*καυσοπολίται*).³

Another small but suggestive common feature is that no fewer than three out of the twelve riots recorded at Constantinople during the reign of Justinian took place on 11 May at the Genethliaca, the games held in commemoration of the anniversary of the founding of the city, in 548, 556, and 562.⁴ Simocatta records⁵ that there was an earthquake on 11 May, 579 that caused 'even the circus maniacs (*τοὺς ἵππομανοῦντας*) to recover their senses'. The Genethliaca were evidently more of an occasion, a cup-final rather than an ordinary league match. The Nika revolt grew out of the troubles which accompanied the special games held on the Ides of January. The connections here are too obvious to be a coincidence.

This, then, is the typical faction riot.⁶ Now while it might be

¹ lxxx.2.3.

² Malalas, pp. 395f.

³ *Doctrina Jacobi*, p. 39.6 Bonwetsch.

⁴ Malalas, p. 483, Theophanes, p. 226.15f.; Malalas, p. 488, Theophanes, p. 230; Malalas, p. 490-1 (held exceptionally on the 13th in 562).

⁵ i.2.10.

⁶ Contrast L. Bréhier's confident but wholly unjustified assertion: 'On constate que les querelles entre les dèmes n'ont jamais lieu à l'occasion des jeux . . . et que les émeutes de l'Hippodrome sont dirigées contre l'empereur par la faction dont il ne porte pas les couleurs' (*Les Institutions de l'empire byzantin* (1949), 198).

rash to insist that *all* faction activity was of this nature, the evidence so far assembled would seem to suggest that most was. So we will be justified in taking a rather closer and more critical look at the two great rebellions where a serious, political motive has been taken for granted, the Nika revolt and the civil war of 609–10.

Two special cases

The Nika revolt caused the destruction of much of the city and (on the lowest ancient estimate—even so probably far too high) 30,000 dead. It all but cost Justinian his throne and marked a turning-point in the reign. Beyond question it was in some sense the work of the factions. But how much was planned and how early the idea of replacing Justinian developed and whose idea it was, these are questions which do not admit of the clear-cut positive answers they usually receive. For example, we saw in Ch. VI that both evidence and probability are against the common assumption that religious motives played a part.

The affair began as an altogether typical faction riot.¹ Two partisans, one Blue and one Green, were to have been executed, but the execution itself was bungled and both men fell to the ground unharmed. Impressed by this obvious sign from heaven, their fellows rescued them by force and lodged them in the asylum of a nearby church. At the race-meeting of the Ides (13th) of January they begged Justinian to pardon the men, but he obstinately refused, even though they persevered up to the twenty-second race. At this Blues and Greens suddenly proclaimed 'Long life to the merciful Blues and Greens' and for the first time ever joined forces.

Next day (14th) Justinian tried to distract them by an offer of more games, but by now the 'merciful Blues and Greens' were busy burning and looting and killing. They had begun by going to the Praetorium and demanding that the city prefect Eudaemon should release the two prisoners. When he refused they broke into the Praetorium and freed all the prisoners

¹ For an analysis of the sources and establishment of the chronology see Bury, *JHS* xvii (1897), 92f., and Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 449–56, with Martindale, 'Public Disorders', 31–6, 85–9. I do not believe that the dialogue between Justinian and the Greens translated and discussed in App. C has any direct connection with the revolt.

there, but after that their killing and burning seems to have been fairly indiscriminate (destroying part of the hippodrome even, and the Baths of Zeuxippus). Later that day they demanded the deposition of John the Cappadocian, Tribonian, and the city prefect Eudaemon; Justinian immediately agreed to this, but the rioting continued unabated for another three days. It was perhaps on the 16th that a crowd went to the house of Probus, a nephew of Anastasius, crying 'Probus for emperor of Rome', but on finding him out they set fire to it and moved on. It was not till the 18th that Hypatius and Pompeius, Anastasius' two other nephews (who had hitherto been closeted in the palace with Justinian), were approached, this time by a band of senators, and Hypatius proclaimed. Hypatius was taken to the hippodrome to be crowned, but at this point Belisarius intervened and the whole insurrection was crushed in a bath of blood.

Now it is not easy to detect much rhyme or reason to all this, much less a concerted and coherent plot by the Blues and Greens. Had their day-long protest about the prisoners been but a pretext to lead up to the protest against John, Tribonian, and Eudaemon next day, then it could very easily have been thwarted if either Justinian or Eudaemon had simply released the men (on the face of it Justinian must have seemed more likely to pardon two murderers than sacrifice his two senior ministers). Nor does it look as if the deposition of John, Tribonian, and Eudaemon was really a very central issue in any case, since Justinian's immediate capitulation made no difference to the rioting. There is much plausibility in the suggestion that it was agents of the senatorial element which was to become increasingly concerned in the affair that contrived to get the names of John and Tribonian added to that of Eudaemon. For it was the upper classes with whom John at least was unpopular; as an ostentatious circus partisan and fierce taxer of the rich he might have been expected to be popular with the people.¹ And they could hardly have had much contact at all with Tribonian, then fully occupied with the compilation of the *Corpus Iuris*.

According to the chronicler Marcellinus, the whole affair was a plot by senators to proclaim Hypatius and Pompeius. This

¹ p. 102.

can hardly be taken seriously,¹ not least because the proclamation was such a late development in a long-drawn-out riot which could easily have been stopped long before that stage (or never been allowed to start in the first place). But it does seem probable that in the end it was senators hostile to Justinian who decided to exploit the rapidly deteriorating situation while there was still time, and appoint a new emperor who could be expected to favour their interests more than Justinian.

It is surely impossible to believe that it was the Blues and Greens who had planned the removal of Justinian from the start. Their only visible aim on the 13th had been the release of the prisoners. It was not till the 14th that they turned against the two prefects and Tribonian, and if this had been intended as the first stage of a plot against Justinian, then it was a plot that he did thwart this time, by deposing all three. Their demands granted, the factions seem to have had no further objective, and simply abandoned themselves to rioting and burning for its own sake. It is likely in any case that the thousand or two actual partisans had by this stage lost the initiative in what had become a general riot. It was another four days before the proclamation of Hypatius, proof enough in itself that nothing had been planned in advance by anybody.

It was the Blues and Greens, for purely selfish reasons of their own, who plunged the city into chaos. For nearly a week Justinian shut himself up in his palace and did nothing while things went from bad to worse. The conviction must have been growing that, if Justinian was not going to act, before long somebody else would have to act for him. That is to say, the idea of replacing Justinian was not the cause of the riot; it was the consequence of his failure to deal with it. In the event he was able, at the last moment and at a terrible cost, to quell it and retrieve his position. Naturally enough it was on the senators who had 'plotted' against him that his retribution fell heaviest.

We pass now to the revolutions of the early seventh century. Undoubtedly the Blues and Greens did play a prominent part in the train of events that led to the fall of Maurice and then in turn to the fall of Phocas. Now in so far as their activity affected the destinies of two emperors, there is an obvious sense in which

¹ Bury (*JHS* 1897, pp. 92-3) rightly regards it as an 'official version'.

it *was* political. None the less, it is a very different matter to represent Maurice and Phocas as puppets in the hands of empire-wide political parties, who could make or break them by simply offering or withdrawing their support.

This interpretation sees everything in terms of a series of changed allegiances on the part of the factions,¹ it being taken for granted that only one colour could 'support' an emperor at any one time (H. Grégoire once went so far as to call the colour the emperor did not favour 'His Majesty's Opposition').

We have already seen that this view is mistaken. Maurice entrusted *both* factions with the task of guarding the walls for him, and both deserted together, following rather than leading public opinion, in the form of a violent demonstration against Maurice in the city which they themselves, still on the walls, cannot have started.² It was not till he had actually fled the city that the Greens turned to Phocas, and then it was the Blues as well as Greens who proclaimed him.³

Passing over the fairly trivial dispute over ceremonial the day after Phocas' coronation (p. 251), the next affair involving the factions is the Patrician Germanus' bid for the throne in 603. The Greens, gathered on the *cochlias*, responded by publicly defaming (*ἔδυσφημοῦν*) the Empress Constantina, whom, together with her three daughters, Germanus had contrived to transfer to the asylum of Saint Sophia. Evidently a Blue conspiracy, it has been assumed, which the Greens opposed through hostility to the Blue Germanus, or out of their lingering hostility to Maurice. This 'Blue conspiracy' is the purest guesswork; is it not simpler to infer that the Greens were anxious to dissociate themselves from Germanus' desperate and hopeless venture? Germanus' only claim to the purple was his connection with the imperial widow, and so the Greens substituted *δυσφημίαι* against her for the *εὐφημίαι* Germanus had been hoping for. Another example of the perversion of a ceremonial role for a political end, carefully performed at the *cochlias*, the staircase along which Phocas would have to pass to reach the hippodrome.⁴

¹ Y. Janssens, *Byz.* xi (1936), 499-536; A. N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* i (1968), Chs. I-V.

² Simocatta, viii.8f. ³ p. 266, n. 1.

⁴ R. Guiland, *Études de topographie byzantine* i (1969), 499f.

The same year there was a big Green riot, with widespread destruction of all the area round the Mese.¹ This is usually represented as a Green 'insurrection' against Phocas, marking the moment when, for political reasons unknown, the Greens 'withdrew their allegiance' from Phocas. The indiscriminate arson points rather to a typical faction riot. If anything turned the Greens against Phocas at this time, it will have been his brutal handling of the riot (the Green demarch was burned alive). Even so, as late as 607 we find him threatening both demarchs with death,² so he can hardly have been going out of his way to 'court' the Blues instead. In 609 Phocas reacted with especial severity against some insults from the Greens, provoking more riots and arson, which he punished by depriving all Greens of public office.³ It was surely this that was behind the Green hostility to him in 609-10.

Such evidence as there is hardly suggests that, during the greater part of his reign, Phocas either regularly supported or was supported by one colour rather than the other. When Heraclius' fleet drew near in 610 he sent both factions to man the harbours⁴ just as Maurice had, and though in the event he was betrayed by the Greens, he would not have trusted them in the first place if it had been notorious that they were 'His Majesty's Opposition'.⁵

The participation of the factions in the virtual civil war that led up to Heraclius' accession in 610 is impressively attested, but its significance must not be exaggerated. It has been suggested, for example, that Heraclius senior in Carthage had concerted a plan with the 'leaders of the Greens' in Constantinople before his son set out.⁶

According to the *Miracula S. Demetrii*, there was civil war all

¹ *Chron. Pasch.* p. 695, with *Doctrina Jacobi*, p. 39 Bonwetsch. According to Janssens, the fact that it is the Greens who riot proves that the Blues were then enjoying Phocas' favour; according to Manojlović, when the Greens riot under Anastasius, or the Blues under Justinian, it is the rioters who enjoy the emperor's favour! There is slightly more to be said for the second view, but in most cases it is unlikely that this factor counted for anything.

² p. 253.

³ p. 254.

⁴ *Jo. Ant. fr.* 110, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 150.8f.

⁵ Jarry (*Hérésies et factions*, 504), embarrassed by what he takes to be the 'confidence absurde' implied by this text, in violation of Greek usage and common sense translates John's words ἐπιτρέπει φυλάττεσθαι ἐκ τῶν Πρασίνων τὸν λιμένα, 'Phocas ordered the harbours to be guarded against the Greens'.

⁶ e.g. Stratos. *Byz. in the Seventh Century* i.81.

over the empire, particularly in Thessalonica, Anatolia, Asia, Cilicia, and Palestine.¹ Paul the Deacon remarks more explicitly that 'in Phocas' reign the Blues and Greens engaged in civil war throughout the East and Egypt, *laying each other low in mutual slaughter*'.² Now there are several texts which bear out, not only the general point about widespread Blue and Green participation in the fighting, but also Paul's emphasis, namely that Blues and Greens were not so much fighting for or against Phocas or Heraclius as against each other.

Take Palestine, for example. 'In these days', wrote the monk 'Antiochus Strategos',³

there arrived certain wicked men who settled in Jerusalem . . . They were named after the dress which they wore, and one faction was dubbed the Greens and the other the Blues. They were full of a villainy, and were not content with merely assaulting and plundering the faithful, but were banded together for bloodshed as well and for homicide. *There was war and extermination ever among them* and they constantly committed evil deeds, even against the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Sometimes the general confusion gave ordinary people an opportunity for revenge. At Rhodes, for example, some sail-makers (enthusiastically aided by Jacob the Jew) laid into Blues 'fleeing from the East',⁴ evidently getting their own back for all they had suffered from the Blues in the past. Elsewhere, in order to get his own back on Christians, the enterprising Jacob posed as a member of whichever of the colours happened to be in the ascendant there and beat up members of the other. The implication is clear that it was the rivalry between Blues and Greens rather than Phocas and Heraclius that he was exploiting. The mutilated faction inscriptions of the period point in the same direction.⁵ Thirty years later we find Blues and Greens exploiting the chaos that followed the Arab invasion in the same way.⁶

¹ PG cxvi.1262. ² HL iv.36.

³ EHR 1910, 503. Janssens (*Byz.* 1936, 533) wrongly referred this text to 614, but in fact the arrival of the factions at Jerusalem is clearly dated *before* the Persian invasion ('Then God sent the Persian . . .').

⁴ *Doctrina Jacobi*, p. 89.25.

⁵ Assembled by Janssens, *Byz.* 1936, 526-7; add the example from Aphrodisias quoted below, p. 315.

⁶ John of Nikiu, §118.3.

There was no ideological gulf between them nor even any genuine loyalty to Heraclius on the one side or Phocas on the other. At one point, according to the full and detailed account of the Egyptian theatre in John of Nikiu, the Blues, usually the allies of Phocas' lieutenant Bonosus, gave every assistance to Heraclius' cousin Nicetas during his occupation of Alexandria.¹ No doubt it did not last long. John continues as follows: '*taking advantage of the war between Bonosus and Nicetas, the Greens of Egypt arose and perpetrated outrages on the Blues, and gave themselves shamelessly to pillage and murder.*'² Nicetas had both parties arrested to restore order. It does not look as if either protagonist in the war derived much reliable help from the factions. Their battles in 609/10 were little more than their traditional rivalry writ large. So far from the colours being a façade for political conflict, on the contrary the political conflict became a convenient façade for the colours to fight each other openly and with impunity.

The factions feature prominently in John of Antioch's account of Heraclius' capture of Constantinople.³ Some Greens rescued Heraclius' mother and wife from the monastery where Phocas had been holding them hostages, and others set fire to the harbour of Caesarius, which they were supposed to be guarding, and fought a skirmish with Bonosus' guards. Yet how militarily or politically significant was the role of the Greens? It was a band of senators who entered the palace, seized Phocas, and took him out in a boat to Heraclius' flagship.⁴

Interestingly enough the accounts of Theophanes and the contemporary *Paschal Chronicle* say nothing about any such Green contribution to Heraclius' victory.⁵ This has been held a serious omission on their part.⁶ But might it not be that in fact they show a better sense of proportion than John, like Malalas an ardent follower of the colours and ever ready to record their

¹ John of Nikiu, §108–14.

² §108.16 (a text whose significance could not be appreciated in Charles's mistaken translation: see p. 83).

³ Fr. 110, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 150.

⁴ Stratos, *Byz. in the Seventh Century* i.90. New evidence has now revealed that Phocas' brother Comentiolos, presumably *magister militum* of the East, held out in Asia Minor for a while even after Phocas' death: cf. W. E. Kacgi, *BZ* 1973, 308f.

⁵ Theophanes, p. 299, *Chron. Pasch.* pp. 700–1.

⁶ Maricq, *BARB* xxxv (1949), 74.

deeds and sayings? Heraclius was no doubt delighted to get his womenfolk back safe, but in other respects the Green contribution may really have been of rather peripheral significance. In one matter John's account is actually contradicted by the Paschal Chronicler, who claims that it was Bonosus, not the Greens, who set fire to the harbour of Caesarius.

There is no need (or justification) to minimize the role of the factions in the conflict. Their bitter fighting all over the eastern provinces was real enough. A Blue was automatically considered an 'emperor's man' (*εὐνοϊτῆς βασιλέως*),¹ and the names of Phocas and Heraclius were added after the colour they supported on factional graffiti. We know that Greens swelled Heraclius' fleet as it sailed to the capital² and after his victory he had the Blue flag solemnly burned in the hippodrome.³ But the notion that he had concerted operations with the Greens from the start is absurd.⁴ Both colours appear throughout as irresponsible and unreliable strong-arm men rather than political parties. Their real contribution to Heraclius' coup was very different. By exploiting as they did the disorder and chaos of Phocas' last two years for their own personal ends they further aggravated the situation, underlining at once Phocas' incapacity to rule and the need for a saviour. When the saviour appeared, characteristically they exploited this situation too in terms of their own rivalry.

Official reactions

So faction riots do not take us very far in our quest for the facts behind the sentimental modern picture of Blues and Greens gallantly standing up to the emperor in the interests of the underprivileged. Let us turn then to the protests and dialogues with the emperor for which they have become so famous. A study of the evidence will reveal that, contrary to the general assumption, Byzantine emperors paid remarkably little attention to petitions from the factions.

¹ *Doctrina Jacobi*, p. 39.8.

² John of Nikiu, §109.25, cf. 107.46.

³ *Chron. Pasch.* p. 701. The significance of this action has been greatly overrated. It symbolizes the humiliation of the Blues, to be sure, but it would be a very trifling punishment for the sort of role modern scholars have imagined for them in the rebellion as a whole.

⁴ e.g. Stratos, *op. cit.* p. 81.

In 498 Anastasius angrily rejected an appeal¹ for the release of some Greens arrested for stone-throwing and sent in troops to quell the protesters. It was Justinian's similarly negative response to the request for the release of Blue and Green malefactors in January 532 that started the Nika revolt.

Two *prima facie* more favourable examples of faction protests under Justinian deserve rather fuller mention. In 556 there was a corn and barley shortage at Constantinople which happened to coincide with the visit of an ambassador from Persia. There was a demonstration at the games by 'men', as a result of which 'some of the leading men of the Blue faction were arrested and punished'.² The Blues certainly appear in a less anti-social light here, but we do not know whether they started the protest (or, if so, why) nor whether this was the only reason they were arrested. In any case, Justinian had no intention of being embarrassed in front of the Persian ambassador and stood firm.

Then there is Procopius' account of an incident at Tarsus early in the reign.³ Malthanes the governor of Cilicia discovered that he got his taxes in better if he used troops. Most people put up with this, but the Blues of Tarsus, 'being bold in the licence which the emperor's favour gave them, heaped many insults upon Malthanes in the public market-place when he was not present among them' (a classic example of a *claque* chanting formal *δυσφημῖαι*). Malthanes was furious and marched straight to Tarsus, where there was a confused night battle with many casualties, including a local councillor who happened to be a Blue patron.

Malthanes may have been acting beyond his powers, yet the Blues did not act out of any such acknowledged right to utter public criticism of their governor as modern scholars suppose, but because they felt sure that Justinian would back them simply because they were Blues. At first he was indeed angry at their treatment, but let the matter drop on receipt of a large bag of gold from Malthanes' father-in-law Leo. When Malthanes next visited Constantinople the Blues there set upon him, evidently at the instigation of their fellows in Tarsus. And

¹ Malalas' words, *παρεκαλοῦν τὸν βασιλεῖα . . . καὶ οὐ παρεκλήθη ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου ὁ αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς; ἀλλ' ἀγανακτήσας . . .*, show that it was indeed a formal appeal from the Greens that Anastasius rejected so intemperately.

² Malalas, p. 488, Theophanes, A.M. 6048.

³ *Anecd.* xxix. 28f.

they would have killed him, says Procopius, if some of their number had not also received gold from Leo. Procopius rightly concludes that it was not an affair that brought credit on any of the parties involved.

The notorious dialogue between Justinian (via his mandator) and the Greens which Theophanes mistakenly connects with the Nika revolt has often been quoted as a classic example of a Byzantine emperor being 'forced to negotiate' with a faction. In fact it proves the very reverse. The two most striking features of the dialogue are that the Green complaints are entirely restricted to alleged injuries suffered by themselves, and that the emperor dismisses them with impatience and contempt.

In 601, scared by the revolt of Phocas, Maurice called a race meeting in order to solicit the reassurance of the factions. Both duly chanted their loyal acclamations, but the Greens took the opportunity of complaining about two officials, Constantine and Domentziolus, who were causing them trouble.¹ Maurice might have been well advised to oblige them under the circumstances, though the fact that later in the year the Greens are found burning Constantine's house suggests that perhaps he did not.² Enough has already been said of Phocas in this context (p. 253). The Green demonstration against Constantina was no true demonstration, but a cowardly device for dissociating themselves from Germanus' plot and will no doubt have gone down very well. Blues and Greens combined protested at Heraclius' incestuous second marriage to his niece Martina, to no avail.³

When the material is put together like this, it becomes clear that Byzantine emperors did *not* pay the respect to petitions from the factions they are popularly imagined to have paid. Nor is it simply a question of the greater arrogance and remoteness of the Byzantine autocrat, disdaining the protests of his people. In the light of these examples it is easy enough to see why Byzantine emperors were less responsive to faction demands than their predecessors had been to circus petitions in earlier centuries.

(a) Unlike (say) the demonstrations organized in anonymity

¹ Simocatta, viii.7.9, Theophanes, p. 287; for the acclamations, below p. 332.

² Simocatta, viii.9.5, Theophanes, p. 288 (Constantine was evidently a close friend of Maurice, cf. Simocatta, viii.9.12).

³ Nicephorus, *Brev.* p. 14 de Boor, with the text as established in App. F.

by the Antioch clique, Blue and Green demonstrations were only too obviously the work of Blues and Greens, dressed as they were in their Blue and Green jackets and sitting in the Blue and Green grandstands. Thus they could never pass themselves off as 'the people', and if (as must often have been the case) their petitions had little or no popular backing, that too must have been obvious.

(b) Almost all the petitions and demonstrations chronicled above have one thing in common: a narrow concern with purely factional interests. Few emperors were likely to be willing to release a convicted murderer just because he was a Blue or punish a government official just because he happened to have offended the Greens.

(c) There is every indication that the factions were far from popular with the general public. Time and again we read of shops, churches, and baths (not to mention private houses) destroyed by their frequent and indiscriminate arson. And many sources describe the fear in which ordinary citizens lived of their violence, notably Procopius¹ for the beginning and Malalas for the end of Justinian's reign.² Thus no emperor was going to win himself general popularity by yielding to unjustifiable faction demands.

And yet it has been claimed that the factions had *special* claims on the emperor's consideration; not moral claims but specific constitutional rights. The evidence on which this view is based are the statements in Malalas³ that Marcian forbade the Greens *πολιτεύεσθαι . . . μήτε στρατεύεσθαι* and Theophanes that Phocas likewise forbade the Greens *πολιτεύεσθαι*.⁴

What does *πολιτεύεσθαι* mean? To 'engage in the political life of the state', it has been argued.⁵ But quite apart from the fact that no parallel can be produced for such a sense, what could it mean in any case? The only relevant right which the Greens, together with the Blues and every other citizen of Constantinople possessed, was to raise their voices in protest sufficiently forcibly to influence the emperor or his representatives. And this was only a right in the sense that nobody could

¹ *Anecd.* vii, *passim*.

² Fr. 51, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 176.16.

³ Malalas, p. 368.15.

⁴ Theophanes, p. 297.4.

⁵ H.-G. Beck, *Senat und Volk von Konstantinopel* (Sitzungsber. München 1966), 49; cf. too his definition in *BZ* 1965, 41, n.80: '*πολιτεύεσθαι* ist terminus technicus für die Tätigkeit der Demen im öffentlichen Leben'.

very well stop them shouting (if they went further than this they could and would be stopped).

How could a 'right' such as this be suspended for one section of the population for a limited period? After particularly bad riots the emperor did occasionally close the hippodrome, thus preventing large assemblies and in effect suspending it for the whole population. It would obviously be absurd to bar the Greens from the hippodromes (what would happen to the races?) nor would *μὴ πολιτεύεσθαι* be a very natural way of expressing this.

No. *πολιτεύεσθαι* must bear here, especially in association with *στρατεύεσθαι*, a meaning which can be amply substantiated from other similar bans (most in practice, if not in intention, temporary): 'to hold public office'. Theodosius I's praetorian prefect Rufinus laid such a ban on Lycians (because his predecessor had packed the administration with Lycians).¹ Pagans were barred from office time and again (first under Honorius in 408), and before long Jews, Samaritans, and heretics were added to the list. Justinian's laws are particularly comprehensive in this respect. The words most commonly used are *militia*, *στρατεία* and *στρατεύεσθαι* (an abundantly documented metaphor for the civil service).² *πολιτεύεσθαι* does not appear in legal sources, but two literary sources use it—the same two that refer to the ban on the Greens. Both Malalas and Theophanes represent Justinian's law of 529 (*CJ* i.5.18.4) as banning pagans (Theophanes adds heretics) *πολιτεύεσθαι*.³ We know from the text of the law itself that it banned pagans and heretics from public service (*μήτε στρατεύεσθαι μήτε τινὸς ἀξιώματος ἀπολαύειν*).

So all that Marcian and Phocas did was to resort to that well-trying and no doubt highly effective punishment, exclusion from the imperial service, carrying as it did that most precious of all commodities to the Byzantine, rank and title. This was how Justinian used to reward his favourites among the Blues.⁴

¹ See *Claudian* (1970), 81–2.

² e.g. *Cod. Theod.* xvi.5.42 (of 408), cf. *Zosimus*, v.46.3; *Cod. Just.* i.5.8.6 (Marcian); *ibid.* i.5.12.9 (527). No reference here to a 'deme-militia'.

³ *Mal.* p. 449.3, *Theoph.* p. 180.18. After the Samaritan revolt of 484 the well-to-do had their property confiscated and were forbidden *στρατεύεσθαι* (*Mal.* p. 383).

⁴ *Procopius, Anecd.* vii.24. It was no doubt because the Greens had been enjoying similar privileges under Theodosius II and his chamberlain Chrysaphius (a patron of the Greens, *Malalas* 368), that Marcian issued his ban.

The religious factor

Faction protests and riot were undeniably frequent. But their number has been mistakenly augmented by two false assumptions: (a) that every mention of 'demes' is a reference to the factions (Ch. II), and (b) that all religious disturbances are faction disturbances (Ch. VI)—whence the common impression that *all* protests and riots in the late Empire were the work of the factions. This is very far from being the case. The factions enjoyed no monopoly in either.

The category of riots about which we have most information throughout this period is the religious. Within only a year or two of the death of Constantine elections to bishoprics could be counted on to divide a city. There was a series of religious riots at Constantinople in 338, 342, 344, 345, and 359, with 3,150 lives allegedly lost in 345.¹ There were to be many more all over the eastern provinces in the fifth and sixth centuries.

The great age of monastic violence was the fifth century, though we find monks active already by the late fourth.² One band threw stones at Gregory Nazianzen in 379, another at John Chrysostom in 403; their burning of pagan shrines and synagogues was causing imperial concern well before the turn of the century. The patriarchs, especially Theophilus of Alexandria and his successors Cyril and Dioscorus, made open use of monks as stormtroopers, and they were particularly active at the two councils of Ephesus, in 431 and 449. As a consequence, the fourth canon of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 sharply attacks those for whom monastic life is merely a pretext, who pass from city to city and 'cause trouble in the churches and in public affairs'. But such condemnations had little effect. Monks were heavily involved in demonstrations and riots arising from Anastasius' religious policy, notably at Constantinople in 510 and 512 and Antioch in 512.

Many more examples and types of religious disturbance could easily be quoted, but it is enough to have made the general point, which is clear and undisputed. In the behaviour of the

¹ See Martindale, 'Public Disorders', 21-2; Socr. ii.16 for the 3,150.

² See in general H. Bacht, 'Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums in den kirchenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen um Chalcedon (431-519)', in *Das Konzil von Chalcedon* ii (1953), 193f., and G. Dagron, 'Le Monachisme à Constantinople jusqu'au concile de Chalcédoine', *Travaux et Mémoires* iv (1970), 229f.

monks of the early fifth century we find already most of the stock features of the later faction riot: burning, stone throwing, use of formal intimidation and general violence.

It was the monks, not the factions, who elevated urban violence into one of the major problems of the late Roman world. Above all, perhaps, it was the monks who accustomed both the inhabitants and the authorities of late Roman cities almost to expect a certain level of violence during popular disorders.¹

So the factions did not either initiate or even dominate the sort of violent behaviour for which they became so conspicuous. They merely indulged in it for its own sake, in pursuance of their own petty and pointless rivalries.

But there is another consideration more relevant still to the notion of the factions as emergent political parties. It was the religious conflicts of the post-Constantinian age, not factional rivalry, that reintroduced politics into the Roman world. Questions such as the succession to a disputed see or what formulation of the creed would be arrived at by this or that council were genuinely political issues. For the first time (except for the case of the Jews) Roman emperors found that they could not simply impose their will—not even by force. They had to be prepared to bargain—and lose. The outcome of the Council of Chalcedon was the most far-reaching political decision taken in the Roman empire since the foundation of Constantinople. Yet it was not a decision taken by a Roman emperor. And in the two centuries that remained before the Arab conquests, no Roman emperor was able to undo its consequences.

Inter-city rivalry had always been a striking feature of the Greco-Roman world. But none of the feuds of the early Empire could match the rivalry between the great eastern patriarchates in the fifth and sixth centuries. Internal rivalry (*στάσις*) was likewise an age-old feature of ancient city life. Here again nothing, certainly not factional rivalry, could divide a city as effectively and bitterly as religious schism. The factions could be

¹ It was likewise the monks rather than the factions who could claim to be protectors of the oppressed and to enjoy a tolerated freedom of speech: W. H. C. Frend, *Past and Present* liv (1972), 21. And in 502 it was monks, not factions, who manned the walls of Amida against the Persians (*ibid.* 8).

and in the end always were suppressed by force; no amount of compulsion could make divided congregations accept the same bishop or creed.

But for all the obvious differences in intention and seriousness between religious protests and faction riots, there is bound to have been some interaction between them. The monks did not grow up in a vacuum any more than the factions. Naturally enough they tended to make use of the traditional machinery and opportunities for expressing their protests. As early as the third century the supporters of Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, were accused of employing the tactics of theatre gangs.¹ By the fifth century the monks made use of formal *εὐφημῖαι* and *δυσφημῖαι* no less than the theatre clagues who had evolved the practice. And what more appropriate place to present protests aimed at (locally) the governor or (in Constantinople) the emperor than the theatre or circus?

The most striking example comes from the recently published ancient life of Marcellus, abbot of the monastery of the 'Sleepless Ones'.² When Leo I gave Aspar's son Patricius the title Caesar and then proposed to make him his son-in-law, the clergy and people alike were very anxious at the prospect of an Arian German as heir apparent. A demonstration in the hippodrome was led jointly by the patriarch Gennadius with his clergy and Marcellus with his monks. With Marcellus as spokesman a dialogue with the emperor took place in the traditional manner. Had the story been recorded instead as a bald entry in a chronicle (e.g. *ἐγένετο στάσις δημοτικὴ περὶ Πατρικίου τοῦ καίσαρος ἄρειανοῦ . . .*), who would not have assumed that it was a factional demonstration and taken it as proof of their concern for religious issues?

On the other hand, as good Christians (or just for the excitement), faction members are bound on occasions to have taken part in religious protests. The only case we know of is when both Blues and Greens took part in the great demonstration against Anastasius in 512. But they are mentioned here not as ringleaders (the implication of Victor's account³ is that they

¹ Eusebius, *HE* vii.30.9.

² *Vie ancienne de saint Marcel l'acémète* § 34, ed. G. Dagron, *Anal. Boll.* lxxxvi (1968), pp. 316-18 (probably dating from the mid sixth century, Dagron, p. 279).

³ See p. 132.

did not join in at the beginning), but because their surprising co-operation well illustrated the unanimity and solidity of the people against Anastasius. It was they, Victor adds, who followed up vocal warfare by setting fire to buildings—a neat example of the factions importing the techniques of their own riots into what had begun as a serious religious demonstration.

The function of the faction riot

The political importance of the factions has for so long been taken for granted that, were it not so obviously true, it might seem merely perverse to suggest that their real importance lay precisely in the fact that they were *not* political.

The people were always ready enough to deliver their petitions and register their protests at the games. But the main reason they went was beyond question to watch and enjoy the games themselves. The man in the Roman street positively lived for the thrill of circus and theatre. It is easy now to smile at the conviction of Christian moralists that the circus and theatre were 'houses of Satan', but in their terms they were quite right to be disturbed at the almost religious fervour with which their congregations abandoned everything for the games. Did they not consult astrologers and sorcerers, and solemnly invoke the powers of darkness to give a pantomime the cramps or break the leg of the rival charioteer's lead horse?¹

Football, as a character in Aldous Huxley's *Eyeless in Gaza* justly observed, is more important than politics. The same was true of the Roman circus. If the Greens lose, sighed Juvenal bitterly,² you will see the city dumbstruck with grief as though in the hour of Cannae. Mens' minds were certainly not on politics at such a moment.

But there is also a sense in which this non-political quality in football (and the Roman circus) can itself become a political factor, as a distraction and an exploitable focus of patriotism, especially in those very Latin American countries of which Huxley was writing. In Brazil, for example, the military junta associated itself closely with the success of its World Cup winning team of 1970 and fêted them extravagantly.³ Their star player Pele—echoing the words of the pantomime Pylades

¹ *Porphyrius*, p. 245.

² *Sat.* xi.199–201.

³ I am much indebted here to some unpublished research by Ian Taylor.

to Augustus—admitted that the victory would do much to strengthen the junta by distracting the people from pressing social problems. Roman emperors likewise extracted the maximum possible capital from their own public appearances at the games—and (like modern politicians, and for the same reasons) often tended to associate with star performers in private. It may indeed be more than a coincidence that Latin America has become as notorious as Rome for the violence of its sports fans. The military juntas, ever fearful of revolution, know that soccer hooligans are the least of their worries, and tolerate them as a harmless distraction.

Roman emperors had always tolerated a relatively high level of public disorder,¹ and some seem to have positively encouraged the rivalries of the games by their own flagrant partisanships. Nero deliberately incited theatre fans to violence, offering prizes and pardons (*fautores histrionum velut in proelia convertit impunitate et praemiis*) and even withdrawing the praetorian cohort that had till then kept at least some measure of order.²

Of course theatre fans were always liable to get altogether out of hand, and even a Nero had in the end to resort to the stern measures of Tiberius. But however often it was banned, the pantomime always came back. After a while the emperor always relented. Even after the horrors of the Nika revolt the hippodrome was functioning again as normal within five years.³

Emperors were evidently unwilling to deprive the whole people of entertainments that were abused by only a minority. It was not fair—and it was not wise either. Sooner or later the pantomime usually led to trouble, but in the meanwhile it gave a great deal of pleasure and much-needed excitement to the great majority of respectable law-abiding citizens. If they were deprived for too long of the opportunity to leave behind them for a few hours the dreary and oppressive realities of their everyday lives, they might begin to think that something could or should be done about them. *This* is why they had to be allowed to go to the games, to 'drive away their cares' as Cassiodorus put it in an interesting essay on the circus.⁴ For a few days at least everyone would be talking about the last great

¹ See p. 184.

² Tacitus, *Ann.* xiii.25.4.

³ Stein, *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 455, n.1.

⁴ *Variae* iii.51, cf. i.31.

victory of Scorpus or Porphyrius instead of grumbling about the price of corn.

This is surely why, despite the trouble they caused, the Blues and Greens of the late Empire were *allowed* to continue. I say 'allowed' because (as we have seen) it is clear that the emperors could and often did suppress their activities by the simple device of closing down the only bases they had to operate from, the theatres and circuses. But this entailed depriving the rest of the citizen body as well, and after a suitable interval the arenas were opened again, in the hope that all would be quiet but in the more realistic expectation that sooner or later more riots, and more closures, would follow.

Now no emperor would have been content with such short-term measures against the recurrence of factional violence if the factions had been in any sense independent political parties, still less parties in any way opposed to himself. The risk was taken because faction riots, though a nuisance (and sometimes worse), were so obviously *non-political*. The typical faction riot was not a protest, it was a battle *between* the two colours; it was not the sort of disturbance that was likely to incite the people at large to join in, much less protest about political issues. On the contrary. So far were the factions from being anti-imperial that, in virtue of their ceremonial role, they might more properly be described as an extension of the emperor's court. When not indulging their high spirits against each other, they were the most conspicuous and vocally loyal of his subjects. Indeed it was the emperor who first extended their official activities beyond the walls of the hippodrome, into the ceremonial of the palace itself. This is why emperors such as Maurice and Phocas called upon the factions (both, of course) to man the walls when the throne was in danger; not because they were a recognized citizen militia but because, when support was falling away on all sides, emperors naturally looked to the factions as last-ditch loyalists.

It is clear enough from the evidence here collected that there *is* a direct connection between the games and faction misbehaviour, just as there is between the football stadium and soccer hooliganism today. But in neither case is the violence to be explained *solely* in terms of the excitement generated by the dancers or

footballers. Other factors are certainly involved. In both cases there is undoubtedly a ritual element, the 'ritual violence' which a social anthropologist has recently claimed as a typical feature of the phenomenon of what he calls 'male bonding'.¹ The games can serve as a field where the youth who lives an otherwise ordinary and unexciting life can prove himself a man by fighting and destroying, hunting in a pack with his peers; for an hour or two he can be an object of fear to all who cross his path. The problems and anxieties that dog his everyday life will be dissipated in the excitement. The riot can actually serve a cathartic function.

This means that, even when faction riots coincided with moments of famine or political uncertainty, more often than not they probably served to diminish rather than heighten the social and political tensions of the situation. It must surely have been as true in Justinian's day as it had been in Martial's, that if guests were beginning to tread on delicate ground, the prudent host would do well to divert them from politics on to that safest of all subjects, the circus:²

de Prasino conviva meus Venetoque loquatur,
nec faciunt quemquam pocula nostra reum.

¹ Lionel Tiger, *Men in Groups* (1969); for the application to soccer hooliganism see Peter Marsh, 'Understanding Aggro', *New Society* 3 Apr. 1975, pp. 7-9, and for a much earlier period, Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth Century France', *Past and Present* 1 (1971), 41-75.

² Martial, x.48.23-4.

XI. The Decline of the Factions

STUDIES of the factions usually conclude with a section on their decline, which is attributed to some reforming emperor, variously identified as Heraclius or Leo III, who stripped them of all their powers with the consolation of a role in imperial ceremonial.

Now if the arguments adduced in the preceding chapters have any validity, the powers of which the factions were allegedly stripped (above all the 'political' rights and the control of public entertainments) were powers that they had never possessed. The only significant formal role they played during the period of their greatest violence (late fifth to early seventh century) was the one they were allegedly first given by this reforming emperor: their role in imperial ceremonial (Ch. IX).

Indeed, the very idea of a 'decline' so conceived is more hypothesis than fact, based in part on the lack of evidence for violent factional activity in the period from Heraclius on and in part on a misapprehension of its nature and purpose before then.

It was not because of any specific powers that could be won or taken away that the factions were so prone to lapse into violence before Heraclius. Even then they *could* be controlled. The emperors who had the most trouble (Anastasius, Justinian, Phocas) were those who relied on punitive rather than preventive measures, occasional ferocity rather than consistent firmness, the use of mailed cavalry once a riot had started rather than a regular police force to stop things getting out of hand in the first place. Justin II issued a stern warning to both colours that he would stand no nonsense from either,¹ and he got none.

Heraclius was favourite for the title 'hammer of the demes' until attention was drawn to their role in the coups of Leontius

¹ 'To the Blues, "for you the emperor Justinian is dead" and to the Greens "for you the emperor Justinian still lives"' (Theophanes, p. 243.6f.).

and Tiberius Apsimar in, respectively, 695 and 698. No decline at all could now be allowed till at least *c.* 700, by when we still find the factions in 'toute leur vitalité'.¹ The silence of the sources between 610 and 700 now had to be explained away. A. Maricq argued that the silence was only apparent, a reflection of sources uninterested in the factions, pointing out that it was in 610 that John of Antioch closed his chronicle. This is in fact a better argument than it might appear.

But for John of Antioch and John Malalas (who closed in 565) we should know next to nothing about faction riots under Anastasius and Justinian. Up to 610 Theophanes records a fair amount of information about the factions, most if not all of it straight from one or other of the two Johns; thereafter nothing. This must certainly be a consequence of his sources. Yet why should those sources, the successors of such popular and influential chronicles as the two Johns, have deviated from their practice and suppressed all mention of the factions if they had been continuing to cause as much trouble as before?

It seems to me that, while the silence of the sources does not warrant the assumption of a sudden suppression of faction activity in 610 or soon after, on the other hand we can hardly just ignore the sources of 85 years and assume regardless that the factions continued in 'toute leur vitalité' from 610 to 695.

The debate has been wrongly conceived. It is not a simple question of decline, defined in terms of loss of rights or powers, whether in the seventh century or later. In the terms of their one and only official role, in imperial ceremonial, they became not less but more important as time passed.

Now the evidence collected above (pp. 249–270) suggests that the ceremonial role of the factions was substantially expanded and codified in the last decades of the sixth century, and in particular during the reign of Heraclius. For a long time it was clearly quite possible for these ceremonial functions to coexist happily enough with the traditional rivalry and rowdiness of the factions. A passage of John Moschus neatly illustrates the passage from one to the other (p. 247). But as the ceremonial became increasingly important, and was performed increasingly in the palace and in churches, far from the excitement of the

¹ A. Maricq, *BARB* xxxv (1949), 67.

games, inevitably the rowdyism will have tended to become less prominent.

So perhaps there is a connection after all between the probability of some measure of decline in faction rioting and the undeniable growth of the ceremonial role of the factions. Not, however, the substitution of a ceremonial role for political power by a reforming emperor. The truth is surely that it was not what they lost but what they gained that inhibited faction violence. As the role of the Blues and Greens in the ceremonial of court and hippodrome grew in importance, so did the Blues and Greens themselves. They were not prevented from rioting; as time passed they simply became too grand for it.

Let us return now to the role of the factions in the coups of Leontius and Tiberius Apsimar. As we saw in Ch. IX, in neither case was it a question of massed Blue and Green armies imposing a new emperor by the sword. In both cases the factions were simply acting out (no doubt for a suitable reward) their all-important role in the imperial coronation ceremony. Their participation in imperial coronations continued throughout the seventh century; miserable as our sources are for the reign of Heraclius, the presence of the factions is explicitly recorded at the coronation of the infant Constantine III, Heraclius II, and the Caesar David (p. 256). Naturally in all these cases their role was purely formal, since all three were crowned by Heraclius himself. But the deposition of Justinian II by Leontius marked the end of the dynasty, the first time since the accession of Heraclius that a new ruler had really needed the legitimization of popular recognition.

It is instructive to compare the transmission of power within the dynasty after Heraclius' death in 641¹. He was succeeded jointly by his two sons (by different wives) Constantine III and Heraclius II. Constantine III died after only three months, whereupon the unpopular empress Martina seized power jointly with her son Heraclius II. There was fierce opposition from all quarters, and Heraclius II was forced to crown Heraclius (subsequently known as Constans II), son of the

¹ For full discussion see Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* ii (1972), 175-204.

popular Constantine III¹. Despite this, however, both he and his mother were soon deposed by the Senate, who recognized Constans II as sole Augustus. Now while there were extensive popular demonstrations against Martina and her son, the factions are never mentioned. No doubt some individual Blues and Greens took part, but they do not appear to have taken any initiative *as factions*. It was unquestionably the Senate that took all the decisive moves². Dethroning a legitimate emperor was a very different thing from assisting at the coronation of successful usurpers.

A damaged inscription of the period³ has often been drawn into this connection:

νικῆ ἡ τύχη
 Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ θεο-
 φυλάκτου ἡμῶν δεσπότου
 * * * * *

The nature of the erased words can be inferred with some probability from another Constantinopolitan inscription of the same period:⁴

νικῆ ἡ τύχη Κωνσταντίνου μεγάλου
 βασιλέως τοῦ συστατικοῦ νικητοῦ
 καὶ Βενέτων τῶν εὐνοούντων.

We should probably supplement *καὶ τῶν Βενέτων* (Grégoire)⁵ or *καὶ τῶν Πρασίνων* (Dölger,⁶ Jarry⁷): 'Long live the fortune of our God-protected lord Constantine and the Blues (or Greens).' There is no way of telling which (nor does it much matter), since we do not know whether both inscriptions refer to the same Constantine.

Some faction graffiti from Ephesus and Aphrodisias where the names of the colours have been erased or even replaced by

¹ He also crowned his brother David under the name Tiberius; David-Tiberius was deposed together with Heraclius II and Martina.

² On the senatorial initiative see Stratos, pp. 203-5 and Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*² (1968), 113-14.

³ *CIG* iv.8789=B. Meyer-Plath and A. M. Schneider, *Die Landmauer von Konstantinopel* ii (1943), 133 (who point out that the last three letters of *δεσπότου* are original and not, as previously thought, a later addition after the erasure).

⁴ *CIG* iv.8788 (now lost). For the epithet *συστατικός* see Mango and Ševčenko, *BZ* lxxv (1972), 388, n.24, who date the inscription to the reign of Constans II (641-68) or Constantine IV (668-85).

⁵ *Byz.* xiii (1938), 165f.

⁶ *BZ* xxxviii (1938), 583.

⁷ *Hérésies et factions* (1968), 533.

the opposite colour¹ suggest that here too the name of the colour was erased by members of the opposite colour. There is no basis whatever for Grégoire's strange notion that the erasure points to an official 'liquidation' of the factions,² nor does it even prove (as Stratos thought) that the Blues played a part in the insurrection of 641³—especially since there is nothing to show that the Constantine of the inscription is Constantine III (641) rather than Constans (Constantine) II (641–68) or Constantine IV (668–85).⁴ All we can legitimately infer from the erasure of the inscription is that faction rivalry was still active in the second half of the seventh century.

Before we leave the house of Heraclius, it is worth adding that when Justinian II recovered his throne from Apsimar in 705, he took savage and protracted revenge on all who had backed the two usurpers. Even the patriarch Callinicus was blinded for insulting Justinian during his coronation of Leontius.⁵ But of the factions, not a word is said. Now if there had been any truth in the orthodox modern account of the coups of Leontius and Apsimar, why should the factions who installed two successive usurpers in Justinian's stead have escaped his vengeance?

There seems to be no further record of the factions playing anything but a purely formal role at an imperial coronation—except perhaps at the coup where Michael III was constrained to elevate his ambitious *paracoimomenos* Basil the Macedonian. It was a complete surprise to the assembled congregation in Saint Sophia when, on 26 May 866, Michael crowned Basil his co-emperor⁶—but the factions were ready with the appropriate

¹ Grégoire, *Recueil*, no. 114.5, and cf. pp. 315–6.

² *Byz.* 1938, 175, suggesting that Constantine or his successor 's'est brouillé avec ce parti, ou encore qu'il a rougi de l'association de son nom avec celui d'une faction'!

³ *Byz. in the Seventh Century* ii (1972), 203. A natural enough inference for those, like Stratos, who believed that senators would be Blues, since we know that the senate took part.

⁴ Grégoire's finely spun case for Constantine III was easily dismantled by Dölger in *BZ* 1938, 582–3 (cf. too S. Mazzarino, *Epigraphica* ii (1940), 302–3). All three are possible—nor can we rule out Constantine V (741–75).

⁵ Nicephorus, p. 42 de Boor; Theophanes, p. 375. Theophanes says that he killed a countless number *ἐκ τε τοῦ πολιτικοῦ καὶ τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ καταλόγου* (cf. p. 119), i.e. soldiers and civilians. There would be no justification for taking the first category for faction members as distinct from ordinary citizens.

⁶ Theoph. Continuatus, pp. 832–3; cf. Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire* (1912), 174–5.

εὐφημίαι. The very ceremonial they must have used has come down to us in the *Book of Ceremonies*,¹ not especially long or complex but not such as could have been produced at no notice. This is not to say that the factions were very deep in Basil's confidence, but if they had withheld their co-operation or betrayed the secret to his enemies, ruthless as he was Basil might have been thwarted.

I would like to suggest, however, that during the reign of the great iconoclast emperor Constantine V (741–75) the factions gained a certain amount of *extra*-ceremonial power—though not by their own initiative.

In 763 Constantine set out to destroy the influential iconodule monk Stephen, abbot of a monastery on Mount Auxentius, not far from Nicomedia.² He got one of his courtiers, George Syncletus, to associate with Stephen and undergo the tonsure.³ Then he called together the people in the hippodrome and, standing in the Red grandstand,⁴ addressed them as follows:

I will have nothing to do with that band hated of God.—

'No trace of them remains in your city, lord.'—

I can no longer withstand their plottings. They have seduced all my subjects and consigned them to darkness. Not content with this they have snatched away from my thigh him who was dearest to my heart, George Syncletus, and made him a monk . . .

Constantine then announced that he would pray for God to reveal George to him again.

¹ *De Caer.* i.386. The date of the various elements in this chapter has been much debated, but the consensus is that it antedates the coronation of Basil (cf. A. Vogt, *Comm.* ii (1940), 2–11).

² *V. S. Stephani iunioris* (PG c.1113f.; the dialogue quoted below at 1135f.) written by Stephanus Diaconus in 808; cf. C. Diehl, 'Une Vie de saint de l'époque des empereurs iconoclastes', *CRAI* 1915, 134f. Theophanes, p. 437, and Nicephorus, p. 72, confirm that Stephen was accused of inciting people to abandon the world for the cloister. A translation with useful commentary will shortly be published by M.-F. Rouan.

³ George *may* have been a genuine disciple of Stephen's and the story of the pre-concerted plan an invention of the iconodule biographer; but this would not affect the way Constantine exploited the incident in the hippodrome.

⁴ Why should Constantine have chosen the Red benches to perform from unless he had been a Red himself? Jarry (*Hérésies et factions*, 540) has him a Blue, for the frivolous reason that his favourite charioteer was called Uranicus, an allegedly Blue name! But perhaps he favoured one of the minor colours so as not to antagonize either of the major colours (compare the case of Anastasius, p. 72).

A few days later he called another assembly in the hippodrome, no less theatrically staged:

I have been victorious, and God has heard my prayer.—

‘When does God not hear you?’—

God has revealed him I seek, and if you wish I will show you him.—

‘Punish him, kill him, burn him who contravenes your bidding.’

Constantine duly produced George, complete in the hated monastic attire. To cries of ‘crucify him’ the different items of his habit were stripped off and trodden underfoot. There and then he was baptized afresh, to undo Stephen’s baptism of him as a monk. After this they dressed him again, this time in the gear of a soldier, with Constantine himself buckling on his sword.

Two years later, in November 765, Constantine held yet another such meeting, as before taking no initiative against Stephen himself, but ‘appealing’ to his people. It is hardly surprising that a few days later Stephen (then in town) was lynched in the streets of Constantinople, victim (it could be alleged) of popular indignation rather than a tyrant’s revenge.

We have heard much of the people pressuring their emperor at the circus, but here we have a classic example of the emperor pressuring his people. It scarcely needs saying that all this was very carefully staged. It would be logical to suppose that those who led the dialogue with Constantine on the people’s side were the factions, and there are in fact several other points that conspire to support this hypothesis.

With the banning of religious art, the main field left available for official art was the games;¹ Constantine replaced the representation of the ecumenical councils on the ceiling of the Milion with a picture of his favourite charioteer.² Grabar has well emphasized the traditional imperial significance of such themes,³ but Constantine’s extravagant emphasis on the games must also have had the more practical effect of delighting circus fans.

¹ *V. Steph.*, *PG* c.1113, δένδρα, ἢ ὄρνεα, ἢ ζῶα ἄλογα, μάλιστα δὲ τὰ Σατανικά ἐπιηλάσια, κυνήγια, θέατρα καὶ ἵπποδρόμια ἀνιστορημένα.

² *V. Steph.* 1172, cf. *Porphyrus*, pp. 204–5.

³ *L’Iconoclasme byzantin* (1957), 155f.; cf. *L’Empereur dans l’art byzantin* (1936), Ch. 1, with the reservations in *Porphyrus*, pp. 20f. (cf. C. Walter, *REB* 1974, 410).

More specifically, the hippodrome meetings just described took place late in 763, after Constantine's triumphal return from a decisive victory over the Bulgars on the shores of the Black Sea.¹ Nicephorus tells us that the emperor handed over his prisoners for lynching 'to the citizens and to the *people of the so-called colours*'.² Here then we have the factions behaving not so gently—though because Constantine was encouraging them, not of their own rowdiness. Theophanes draws attention to Constantine's glorification by the factions at his triumphal games;³ since acclamations by the factions were normal every time the emperor entered the hippodrome Theophanes' words perhaps imply something more specific and spectacular on this occasion. Add to these details the far more important fact revealed in another work of Nicephorus (p. 137), that the leaders of the factions (*both* factions) were prominent among the iconoclast party ('as you would expect of such a rowdy bunch', predictably adds the iconodule Nicephorus).

It is perhaps legitimate to suggest that Constantine deliberately courted the factions, bodies traditionally very close to the emperor, and encouraged them to lend him their peculiar assistance in his campaign against the monks, both through their role as spokesmen of the people in the hippodrome and also in their capacity to exert a more practical influence (whence Nicephorus' allusion to their rowdiness).

Such allies among the people would have been useful for Constantine's other theatrically staged anti-monastic demonstrations in the hippodrome; as when in 766 monks and nuns were made to parade around the arena hand in hand to the hisses of the people⁴ (at Ephesus they were given the choice between marriage or blinding!).⁵

If I am right, then, under Constantine V we find the factions playing what amounts to a political role—though not, of course, an *independent* role. There must surely have been other occasions in other periods when emperors exploited the factions in this or similar ways.

In an influential paper of 1949 A. Maricq argued that as late as

¹ 763 rather than 762; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byz. State*² (1968), 169, n.1.

² p. 69.20.

³ p. 433.12.

⁴ Theophanes, p. 437.27.

⁵ Theophanes, p. 445.5.

811 the factions were still independent political parties, poised even then to take over the Byzantine state¹. Two texts underlie this claim.

First a passage in the *Patria* of Ps.-Codinus: Michael Rangabé, *curopalates* under Nicephorus I (802–11) and subsequently Michael I (811–13), is said to have broken off the hands of the statue of the Tyche of the city ‘so that the popular parties. (*δημοτικὰ μέρη*) would have no power against their rulers’.² Maricq took it for granted that these parties must be the factions.

Second, there is Theophanes’ account of the aftermath of Nicephorus’ defeat and death at the hands of Krum the Bulgar in 811. Nicephorus’ son, Stauracius, himself mortally wounded, was in two minds about the successor he must name. His sister wanted the throne for her husband, Michael Rangabé, but Stauracius’ own instinct was to confer the crown on his empress, Theophano, rather than ‘raise up democracy (*δημοκρατίαν ἐγείραι*) for the Christians to crown their existing misfortunes’³. *Democracy?* Bury thought that perhaps the dying emperor really did toy with the idea of restoring democracy, ‘the wild vision of a morbid brain’.⁴ Dölger and Bratianu⁵ rightly pointed out that the word had changed in meaning by the Byzantine age. In the light of passages such as *ἐδημοκράτησε τὸ Βένετον μέρος*⁶ and under the influence of the ‘deme-fallacy’ (Ch. II), they defined the word: ‘mouvement populaire *en rapport avec l’organisation des deme*’. Maricq offered the more moderate definition: ‘le pouvoir exercé par le peuple ou par un

¹ *BARB* xxxv (1949), at pp. 70–2; cf. Ostrogorsky, p. 197, n.1.

² *Script. Orig. Cpol.* ii (1907), ed. Preger, p. 205, § 101. One of the many MS. variants in this chapter (see Preger’s app. crit.) says that Michael acted at the orders of an emperor (? Nicephorus) and so presumably before his own accession.

³ Theophanes, p. 492.27.

⁴ *Eastern Roman Empire* (1912), 18.

⁵ ‘Empire et “Démocratique” à Byzance’, *BZ* xxxvii (1937), 86f.

⁶ Theophanes, p. 166.26; cf. τὸ Πράσινον μέρος ἐδημοκράτησε ἐν τῇ ‘Ρώμῃ (Malalas, p. 244, under Gaius!); Claudius . . . τῇ δημοκρατίᾳ τῶν Πρασίνων κατὰστασιν ἔδωκεν (Malalas, p. 246); Ephraem the governor ἡγωνίσαστο κατὰ τῶν δημοκρατούντων Βενέτων. καὶ λοιπὸν ἠσύχασεν ἡ δημοκρατία τοῦ Βενέτου μέρους (Malalas, p. 417); τὸ Πράσινον μέρος Ἀντιοχείας δημοκρατοῦν ἐπήρχετο τοῖς ἄρχουσιν (Malalas, p. 393); cf. the letter of Atticus, patriarch of Constantinople, to Cyril of Alexandria justifying his insertion of John Chrysostom’s name in the diptychs as his legitimate predecessor under popular pressure, ἡμῶν βιασαμένων τὴν ἐκ τῆς δημοκρατίας ἀνάγκην (*PG* lxxvii.349D); Atticus agreed ὥστε μή . . . ἐθισθῆναι εἰς δημοκρατίαν τὴν πόλιν (*ibid.* 352A), where the context shows that an unfavourable sense is intended, ‘violent pressure’.

parti populaire'. Yet so precise a meaning simply does not fit the examples quoted below. The shift in the meaning of the word is more complete and more ironic still: merely 'riot'.¹ It is the reference to the colour that identifies the faction riot; δημοκρατία (-έω) is itself of quite general significance. This is why the same Theophanes can use it of 'cosmic disturbances' (κοσμικαὶ δημοκρατίαι) in the sky following the appearance of a comet.²

Stauracius was afraid that if he named Michael rather than Theophano he would be plunging the empire into civil disorder (because Michael would not be capable of facing up to its problems at this moment of crisis—as indeed he was not). Not democracy, then; nor a 'faction coup'; just chaos.

As for Tyche's broken hands, the *Patria* are full of silly stories about the powers of statues.³ If there was such a legend connecting Tyche's hands with popular parties, then naturally there is no evidence here for *real* popular parties in Michael's own day. Jarry⁴ went further even than Maricq in inferring that it was Michael Rangabé who 'liquidated' the factions. But even the *Patria* ascribe to him only a pious hope.⁵

We are now in the ninth century, the world of the *Book of Ceremonies*. At last we really know where we are (so it is confidently assumed). The factions of the ninth and tenth centuries lived for nothing but the races and the attendant ceremonial. 'Toutes les manifestations officielles à l'Hippodrome étaient réglées d'avance; on ne laissait rien à l'initiative privée . . . Les démarques, créatures des empereurs, n'auraient certainement pas permis à leurs factions d'adresser publiquement au chef de l'État des demandes indiscrettes.'⁶

So admittedly the *Book of Ceremonies* might *seem* to suggest. But there is a gaping fallacy in the assumption, obvious enough when recognized. The *Book of Ceremonies* is no record of what the factions actually *did*. It is a collection of the protocols they were

¹ That is to say τὸ βέβητον μέρος ἐδημοκράτησε means *exactly* the same as τὸ βέβητον μέρος . . . ἠτάκτει (Malalas, p. 416B).

² p. 181.17.

³ Some are quoted by Mango in *DOP* 1963, 61.

⁴ *Hérésies et factions*, 544.

⁵ If anything is to be made of patriographical sources in this connection, it is relevant to quote the statement of the mid-8th-century *Par. Synt. Chron.* § 63, p. 61 Preger: 'There have been many murders and evils in the hippodrome, *especially* in former times'.

⁶ Guillard, *BS* 1969, 2-3.

supposed to perform on a limited number of special occasions, protocols that were periodically revised and updated so as to serve as accurate models. This being the purpose of this very practical book, it should be obvious that nothing but the correct ceremonial for certain occasions will have been included. Everything else will have been not so much excluded as simply omitted, not because it was 'indiscreet' or disloyal but because it was irrelevant.

There must have been a Book of Ceremonies of sorts already in the sixth century, a collection of the rather simpler protocols then in use. A fair number of factional utterances of the period, mostly anything but respectful, have come down to us in the chronicles, suggesting that their *notarii* and *chartularii* kept very full records. It will have been from these files that the earliest ceremonial books were compiled, though naturally the abusive matter will have been omitted as irrelevant. It was only the *εὐφημῖαι* that had to be got right; *δυσφημῖαι* they could make up on the spur of the moment.

So while Constantine VII's *Book of Ceremonies* tells us a great deal about the purely ceremonial side of factional activity in the ninth and tenth centuries, it does not, never purported, and cannot be expected to tell us anything whatever about anything else they did or said. To look in the *Book of Ceremonies* for evidence of factional violence is like looking for evidence of student sit-ins in a university calendar.

It would be gratuitous and implausible to suggest that the Blues and Greens still rampaged up and down the Mese setting fire to shops and churches every race-day. That sort of behaviour probably died out, at least as a regular thing, in the seventh century. But it would be no less implausible to assume that, given their continuing role as *de facto* spokesmen of the people at the games, they *never* gave vent to abuse or protest at moments of stress or tumult.

We do in fact possess a curious and unfortunately corrupt poem which has been plausibly identified as a satirical song about the Empress Theophano, wife successively of Romanus II and Nicephorus Phocas, and finally exiled by her lover John Tzimiscēs.¹ There are no positive grounds for supposing that the poem (probably written in 970, when Theophano was safely in

¹ G. Morgan, 'A Byzantine Satirical Song', *BZ* xlvii (1954), 292-7.

exile) was publicly performed by the factions, but it is in political (then known as 'demotic') verse, the standard metre for factional doggerel in the later period,¹ and the possibility should certainly be left open. From the early twelfth century we have much more such faction doggerel in political verse, mostly ascribed to the prolific Theodore Prodromos.² All are respectful not to say cringing offerings for imperial occasions, but it might be rash to infer that, even now, this was the only sort there was.

Faction rivalry at least will never have declined, permanently fostered as it was by the continuing excitement of the races³ (chariot-racing was the one overriding preoccupation of the Blues and Greens from first to last). Can we really believe that the excitement *never* proved too much for even the pampered factions of the tenth century and after? Was there *never* even a mild δημοτικὴ οὐμβολή under Constantine VII or the Comneni?

Faction activity lasted as long as the emperors continued to live in the Great Palace and patronize the hippodrome. With the transfer of the imperial court to Blachernae in the course of the twelfth century both the hippodrome and chariot-racing itself fell into decline.⁴ The factions did not survive. For all their long and intimate association with imperial ceremonial in all its aspects, they remained circus fans to the end. With the decline of the circus they lost their primary *raison d'être* and the basis for their role in ceremonial. With their decline the demotic verse they had developed and made their own took on a new name with wider connotations, the name it has borne ever since, the political verse.⁵

¹ See Michael Jeffreys, 'The Nature and Origins of the Political Verse', *DOP* xxviii (1975), at pp. 238f.

² *Ibid.* pp. 177 f.; Theodoros Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte* (ed. W. Hörandner, 1974), Nos. IV, V. IX–XIV, XXXI–XXXIII.

³ Though the *number* of races did fall quite sharply, from 24 and more a day in the sixth century to only 8 in the tenth: cf. *Porphyrius*, pp. 256–7.

⁴ *Porphyrius*, pp. 5–6.

⁵ Jeffreys, p. 180.

XII. Epilogue

THE story of the circus factions is long and complex, from Romulus to the Crusades, from the circus of Rome to every arena in the Byzantine world. Small wonder that those who have concentrated on limited aspects have been baffled and misled.

There is a deceptive line of continuity between the Blues and Greens of Rome and Constantinople. The 'original' Blues and Greens were exclusively circus fans. Alongside them but quite unconnected, there had always existed the partisans of the theatre, more rowdy but less conspicuous under a multitude of ephemeral names. The amalgamation of public entertainments described in Ch. VIII united them both under the names of the circus colours. It was this event that gave birth to the factions of the early Byzantine world.

There were two crucial ways in which these more numerous 'theatrical' Blues and Greens transformed their relatively uninteresting circus predecessors. (a) The hooliganism formerly associated with countless individual bands of anonymous theatre fans now became the virtual monopoly and ubiquitous hallmark of the 'new' Blues and Greens. (b) The claque system of the theatre fans was introduced into the circus, and the new Blue and Green claqueurs made responsible for the ceremonial performances that greeted the emperor at his public appearances.

It was this ceremonial role that was to change the character of the factions and raise them to a position of real importance. The rowdy behaviour which has always attracted most attention, then as now, certainly increased both in violence and perhaps too in frequency, but it brought nothing new of either political or even social significance. Contrary to popular belief (modern, not ancient), the factions did not champion popular causes or resist the demands of central government (except in its police capacity). Least of all did they spearhead 'resistance to imperial absolutism'; on the contrary, their increasing

involvement in imperial ceremonial drew them ever closer to the emperor. By the seventh century they had effectively become a part of his court.

Naturally they began to riot less. What had they ever gained from riots? What did they lose by giving them up? But they remained ready enough to exploit their remarkable power (an unintended consequence of the role they always played in coronation ceremonies) of influencing the proclamation of usurpers. Such was their decline.

Thus the rise and decline alike of the Blues and Greens of Byzantium are less clear-cut as well as less momentous than has generally been supposed. Their sudden leap to prominence in the fifth century is largely illusory, not a new phenomenon at all but the incidental consequence of a reorganization of public entertainments. Their 'decline' is really an ascent to respectability. Nothing was changed for the better by their rise, nothing was changed for the worse by their decline.

Hooliganism at theatre and circus had always been rife in the Roman world. It merely got worse under the Blues and Greens. Popular protest and demonstration too had flourished in the early Empire and were to flourish again in the late Byzantine period.

Between 1042 and 1081 there were five popular insurrections in Constantinople, four of which succeeded in deposing emperors (Michael V, Michael VI, Constantine X, Michael VII). S. Vryonis Jr.¹ has shown that in every case the city guilds played an important part—confirmed by the pains the next emperor took to reward them for their efforts. But when he goes on to conclude that by the eleventh century the guilds had come to exercise 'some of the political functions of the old demes and circus factions',² the perspective needs correcting.

It may be that the eleventh-century guilds did serve as a vehicle for 'the political expression of the people', but the factions of the sixth and seventh centuries did not. Indeed, when did the factions ever take so active a part against an established emperor? To recapitulate the most favourable

¹ 'Byzantine *δημοκρατία* and the Guilds in the Eleventh Century', *DOP* xvii (1963), 289-314.

² p. 314. Vryonis believed that the 'so-called demes (militia) and the circus parties (Blues and Greens)' (p. 291) were somehow distinct.

example, the fall of Maurice in 602, the popular insurrection that drove Maurice to give up the struggle began when the factions were still loyally manning the walls for him against Phocas (their contribution was to welcome Phocas once Maurice had fled). The role of the eleventh-century guilds should be seen for what it is: a *new* development in popular expression¹.

The guilds of Constantinople will have numbered many thousands, drawn from every profession, from the wealthy to the humble. There is some probability that, when moved to political action, they would be tolerably representative of the people as a whole—at least as representative as any popular movement of the day was ever likely to be. The factions as we have come to isolate and identify them in this book will have been a wholly unrepresentative body, numbering at best a thousand or two. Popular protest did take place during their violent heyday—but mostly without their co-operation and despite their hindrance (their intervention may often have discredited a serious demonstration, justifying the emperor in dismissing it as a faction brawl).

The circus factions deserve no prominent mention in any history of popular expression. The guilds of the eleventh century are the heirs, not of the factions of the early Byzantine world, but of the *populus* of Rome.

The Blues and Greens made one and only one original, important, and lasting contribution to Byzantine life and institutions: their role in the dazzling ceremonial that, to the amazement of foreign visitors, surrounded and exalted the person of the emperor.

¹ Despite the few examples quoted above (p. 85), Roman guilds were not normally politically active: see R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations* (1974), 75f., with some interesting remarks on 'the focusing of their energies on the pursuit of honor rather than of economic advantage' (p. 76).

APPENDIX A

M. Aurelius Basilius, 'princeps' of the Blues

'Basilius was the *princeps* of the Blue circus faction, an important man . . . and a member of the opposite faction to that favoured by Commodus' (Whittaker, *Historia* 1964, 368, n.159).

Here is the inscription to which we owe all we know of Basilius (*IG* xiv.1503):

Θ(εοῖς) Κ(αταχθονίοις)
 Βασιλίου
 νέκρον (sic) χά
 ριν ἐπίη
 σεν¹ Μ. Αὐρ.
 Διονύσις
 ἀδελφῶ.
 ἰς ἑῶνα Βενετιανούσ, Πρίν
 κιπι

Franz (*CIG* 6354) solved the problem of the apparent dative (= *principi*) in the last line by reading *ἰς ἑῶνα Βενετιανοῦ σ(υστήματος) πρίνκιπι* (agreeing with ἀδελφῶ), 'to his brother, *princeps* of the Blue guild'. Now quite apart from the fact that *σύστημα* would be an inappropriate (and unattested) term for a circus faction, this is surely very improbable Greek. It would be acceptable enough to wish a dead man eternal life (though *εἰς αἰῶνα* is not a formula used for this purpose),² but simply absurd to wish that he be 'head' of the Blues for ever! In fact the acclamation *εἰς αἰῶνα* is restricted to concepts that might reasonably be wished to exist for ever, such as the empire, the laws of a city, and so forth.³ It must be added that *ἰς ἑῶνα . . . πρίνκιπι* is written well apart from the main epitaph at the bottom of the stone,⁴ and is surely on grounds of probability and style alone to be regarded as a quite separate and independent inscription.⁵

¹ i.e. νέκρων χάριν ἐποίησεν.

² For those that are see R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (1942), 48f.

³ L. Robert, *Études épigr. et phil.* (1938), 109, cf. E. Peterson, *Eis Θεός* (1926), 168f.

⁴ As I have been able to verify from an excellent photograph kindly supplied to me by L. Moretti. The stone is still in the Basilica of Saint Paul in Rome.

⁵ A. Neppi-Modona's list of circus terms in *Hommages à L. Herrmann* (1960), 570, quite unjustifiably includes *πρίνκεψ συστήματος* as a technical term equivalent to *dominus factionis*, solely on the basis of *IG* xiv.1503.

There is even less to be said for Kaibel's interpretation (*ad IG* xiv.1503): keep *Βενετιανούς* and write *πρίνκιπς*, an apostrophe to the emperor. The final iota is clearly legible, and there seems no rhyme or reason for an apostrophe to the emperor in such a context.

It seems to me that we must retain *Βενετιανούς* and interpret *πρίνκιπς* as a vocative from the proper name *Πρινκίπιος*. Principius, as Kajanto saw,¹ is Basilius' *signum* or *supernomen*.

The epitaph proper ends with *ἀδελφῶ*, and Dionysius (or conceivably someone else) then added a less solemn postscript, in affectionate reminiscence of his brother's partisanship: 'the Blues for ever, Principius!' 'The Blues' is a concept greater than individual Blues, which could appropriately be wished 'eternal life'. Compare the rather similar inscription from Didyma,² *Πράσινον εἰς τ[οὺς αἰῶνας]*, and of course the standard *νικᾶ ἢ τύχη τῶν Πρασίνων* (*Βενέτων*), meaning 'long live the Greens (Blues)'.³

No *princeps* of the Blues then. All we have is a Basilius *signo* Principius who was an ordinary Blue partisan.

¹ *A Study of the Greek Epitaphs of Rome* (1963), 43, with many other examples of acclamations and apostrophes added to Greek epitaphs in Rome.

² *I. Didyma* 611, cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 20.

³ See *Porphyrius*, p. 79.

APPENDIX B

The distribution of Blues and Greens in the eastern provinces

Where possible I have drawn attention to indications of date, though with inscriptions which bear no such indication I have not repeated the impressions of individual editors; it will be enough to state generally here (and cf. p. 199) that none has been judged earlier than the fifth century while many may be as late as the seventh.

Ai. Christophilopulu's study 'οἱ ἔκτος τῆς Κωνσταντινοπόλεως Βυζαντινοὶ δῆμοι', *Χαρ. εἰς Α. Κ. Ὀρλάνδον* ii (1966), 327–60 (here cited simply as 'Chr.' with page number) is a useful but less complete collection. I normally quote inscriptions in the most accessible edition, and have made no attempt to supply a full bibliography.

MAINLAND GREECE

Phthiotic Thebes (near the boundary between Achaia Phthiotis and Thessaly). Acclamation to the 'orthodox Greens' (quoted p. 149) published by P. M. Lazarides, *Πρακτ. Ἀρχ. Ἐταιρ.* 1969 [1971], 21, with pl. 23a (who, misunderstanding the form of the acclamation—see *Porphyrus*, pp. 74–9, 276—mistakenly takes it as an allusion to the Nika revolt of 532).

Thessalonica. Two inscriptions of unfortunately unknown or uncertain provenance published by C. Edson in *IG x.2.1* (1972): 20b, a very fragmentary undated reference to *Πρ]ασίνους*, and 842, from the tomb of a charioteer Uranius who *εὐνόησε Βενέτω* (for the omission of the article (cf. *Βενέτου*, *ibid.*), found odd by Edson, see *Porphyrus*, pp. 70–1).

Constantinople. The earliest literary reference is Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 37 (31), *In Matth.* 19.1–12, §18 (*PG xxxvi.301, 304*). The earliest inscriptions (c. 500) are those from the new base to *Porphyrus*, published in *Porphyrus*, Ch. II.

AEGEAN ISLANDS

Rhodes. *Doctrina Jacobi*, p. 89 Bonwetsch (early seventh century), for Greens.

Crete. Acclamation to Greens: *Inscr. Cret.* iv (1950), 513, sixth century (see p. 126).

'The islands and the various stations on the sea coast', in 610 (John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, p. 176 Charles), for Greens.

ASIA MINOR

Cyzicus. Procopius, *BP* i.25.40 (cf. *Anecd.* 17.41), for Greens, and Malalas, p. 491–2, under Justinian.

Ephesus. Eight early seventh-century acclamations: Grégoire, *Recueil*, nos. 112 (Blues); 113 bis (Blues); 113 ter (Blues); 114 (Green); 114 bis (Green); 114 ter a (Green); 114 quater (?); 114⁵ (Greens) (see too Chr. pp. 35of., and above, pp. 147–8). Others await publication.

Priene. Acclamation to Greens: *Inscr. von Priene* 353 = Grégoire, *Recueil*, no. 120 (cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 77).

Miletus. Unpublished place-inscriptions from seats in the theatre, kindly shown to me by Peter Hermann: τόπος αὐραρίων Βενέτω(ν), Βενέτων ἐ. ο. εων (?) on which see above, p. 248.

Didyma. *Inschriften von Didyma*, nos. 603–4, with L. Robert, *Hellenica* xi/xii, 49of. (Blues), and 609–11 (cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 70), for the Greens.

Aphrodisias. Acclamations to Blues and Greens published (by courtesy of Kenan Erim, Joyce Reynolds, and Charlotte Roueché) in *Porphyrius*, p. 276, plus (unpublished) another from the theatre, [κα]κὰ τὰ [ἐ]τ[η] τῶν Πρασίῶν, and three more from the Odeum: . . . Βενέτου, τόπος Βενε' (with the last 7 letters partially erased) and τόπος Βενέτων inscribed above Ἐβρέων τῶν παλειῶν. For κακὰ τὰ ἐτῆ cf. *De Caer.* 318.13 and an unpublished inscription from Alexandria.

Stratoniceia. Acclamation to Greens: Grégoire, *Recueil*, no. 243 bis (cf. Robert, *Hellenica* x.232, n.1).

A site near the boundary between Phrygia Pacatiana and Pisidia. Acclamation of Greens: Grégoire, *Recueil*, no. 311 (text above, p. 148), as located by Robert, *Hellenica* x, 228–39.

Cilicia. John Lyd., *de magg.* iii.62, p. 153 Wuensch, under Justinian: John the Cappadocian conciliates the Greens in Cilica.

Tarsus. Blues under Justinian: Procopius, *Anecd.* xxix.3of.

SYRIA

Antioch. Many early apparent attestations in Malalas are almost certainly anachronisms (above, pp. 195, 200); the first secure reference is to Green riots in the reign of Zeno (Mal. pp. 389–90, with p. 150). Frequently thereafter (e.g. Theophanes, p. 166 and Procopius, *Anecd.* 12.28 for Justin I).

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Apamea. ACO iii.96.17f. of 518 (actress of Blues); Procopius, *BP* ii.11.31f., of 540 (pantomime of Blues).

Heliopolis. Acclamation to Blues: *IGLS* vi.2836 (*Porphyrus*, p. 74).

Berytus. Curse tablet against Blue horses and charioteers: *SEG* vii.213, with A. Maricq, *Byzantion* 1952, 368f. For the date above, p. 194.

Apheca. Curse tablet against Blue pantomime, Audollent, *Defix. Tab.* 15-16, with Robert, *Études épigr. et phil.* (1938), 99-102, and Maricq, *Byzantion* 1952, 360-8. For the date, above, p. 200, n.1.

Taff (in the Ledjâ). Acclamation to the Blues: *Princeton Expedition to Syria* iiii (1921), no. 804 (*Porphyrus*, p. 74).

Umm idj-Djimâl. Two acclamations to the Blues: *Princeton Expedition to Syria* iiii (1921), nos. 256 and 266 (*Porphyrus*, p. 74). Acclamation to the Reds: Waddington 2425 with *Pr. Exp. Syria* iiii, p. 148 and p. 72 above.

'*Ormân*. $\nu\kappa\tilde{\alpha}$ ἡ τύχη τῶνων κα(ι) τοῦ βασιλεως, πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη, with the date 611 inscribed elsewhere on the altar (R. Dussaud, *Voyage, archéol. au Safâ* (1921), p. 164, no. 33, with *Pr. Exp. Syria* iiii, p. 148). In the light of Grégoire 114 and 114.5 from Ephesus (quoted p. 147) it seems likely that the second gap contained the name Heraclius and the first *Πρασίμων* (or some high-flown, longer variant), both subsequently erased by the opposition.

PALESTINE

Caesarea. Pace Christophilopulu (p. 359), when Theophanes says (p. 230) that Jews and Samaritans united ἐν τάξει *Πρασινοβενέτων* in 555, he means only that their union was as surprising as that of the *Πρασινοβένετοι* of the Nika revolt. So no valid evidence for Caesarea.

Jerusalem. Acclamation to Blues: *SEG* viii.213, with L. Robert, *Hellenica* xi/xii.492 and *Porphyrus*, p. 74, n.3. And for Blues and Greens in the early seventh century, 'Antiochus Strategus', *EHR* xxv (1910), 503.

EGYPT

Alexandria. *P. Cairo Isidore*, 57-8, of 315, referring to the Blues; Malalas, frag. 49, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 169 of 516; Lefebvre, *Recueil des inscr. grecques chrét. d'Égypte* (1907), no. 37 (Blues); John of Nikiu, §§107-8 (610), 119 (642). Fifteen graffiti (mostly of the $\nu\kappa\tilde{\alpha}$ ἡ τύχη . . . type) from a theatre in the middle of the city still unpublished. I am very much in the debt of Dr. Z. Borkowski for the opportunity of studying this interesting find.

Aykelah. John of Nikiu, §97 (under Maurice), for Blues and Greens.

Menouf. John of Nikiu, §107 (under Phocas), for Greens.

Heracleopolis. *Sammelbuch* 9154 (6/7th cent.); *P. Stud. Pal.* viii. 1179 (6th cent.); *ibid.* 1180 (7th cent.); 1087 (8th cent.); *ibid.* x. 197 (7/8th cent.); 225 (8th cent.), all but 1179 attesting a quarter (λαύρα) of the Blues (*Chr.* p. 346, n. 77).

Oxyrhynchus. *P. Oxy.* 145 (552), embrocation for Green horses; 152 (618), Blues; 2480 (565/6), Blues; *PSI* 953.42 (6th cent.); *P. London* 1028 (7th cent.), Greens; two Blue acclamations (time of Phocas), *Stud. ital. di fil.* 1912, 305 = *Sammelbuch* 6018 (cf. p. 148 above).

Antinoe. Comb depicting Blue pantomime: A. Dain, *Inscr. grecques du Musée du Louvre* (1933), no. 217 (with *Porphyrius*, p. 74); the charioteer papyrus, now republished (and dated *c.* 500) by E. G. Turner in *JHS* 1973, 191–5 (with colour plate).

Of unknown provenance, *P. Strasb.* 287 (6th cent.), referring to Blues (cf. p. 148 above).

Postscript: M. Chéhab, 'Le cirque de Tyr,' *Archeologia*, Feb. 1973, p. 20, announces the discovery of a mosaic inscription to the Blues in a bath near the hippodrome of Tyre, unfortunately with no indication of its date or character.

APPENDIX C

A circus dialogue

This remarkable dialogue has been much misunderstood, both in details of interpretation and in its over-all purpose and significance. The wider aspects are dealt with elsewhere in the book (e.g. pp. 140 f., 287); this appendix presents a translation, some notes on the more obscure passages, and my reasons for disassociating it from the Nika revolt of 532. There are also one or two remarks on its supposedly metrical character.¹

The dialogue itself is introduced with the words: γέγονε δὲ ἡ ἀταξία τοῦ Νίκα² τρόπῳ τοιούτῳ· ἀνελθόντα τὰ μέρη τῷ ἵππικῷ, ἔκραξαν οἱ (δῆμοι, add. *Chron. Pasch.*) τῶν Πρασίνων ἄκτα διὰ Καλοπόδιον τὸν κουβικουλάριον καὶ σπαθάριον. As Tabachovitz alone has seen (*Studien*, 45), there should be no punctuation after Πρασίνων. ἄκτα διὰ K. is not intended, as it has always been taken, as a title for the dialogue; ἔκραξον οἱ τῶν Πρασίνων ἄκτα διὰ K. means 'the Greens shouted acclamations at Calopodius'. ἄκτα is the technical term for faction acclamations (e.g. *De Caer.* 216.20, οἱ κράκται δὲ λέγουσιν ἀπὸ τούτων ἕτερα ἄκτα 'καλας ἡμέρας . . .', 51.6f., 326.21f. etc.). Compare from Malalas (p. 407.19) the similar acclamations (omitting the word ἄκτα but using διὰ+acc. followed by direct speech in the same way) addressed to Anicia Juliana's husband Areobindus in 512, ἔκραξον διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς Ἀρεόβινδον βασιλέα τῆ Ῥωμανία, which means 'they shouted at her husband, "Areobindus for emperor of Rome"'. The title of a set of ἄκτα is ἀκτολογία (e.g. *De Caer.* 251.15, ἀκτολογία τῶν δῆμων ἐπὶ προαγωγῇ (=promotion) πατρικίου).

¹ There are translations into English in the two editions of Bury's *Later Roman Empire* (ii¹ (1889), 57-9 and ii² (1923), 71-4); into French in C. Diehl, *Justinien et la civilisation byzantine au VI^e siècle* (1901), 458-61; into German by J. Irmscher, in *Orbis Mediaevalis, Festgabe für Anton Blaschka* (1970), 78-88. Add (in addition to many passing allusions in general works on the period and on the factions) P. Karlin-Hayter, 'Les ἄκτα διὰ Καλοπόδιον, la forme primitive', *Festschrift Marcel Richard* (in press; seen by courtesy of the author), and *Byz.* xliii (1973), 84-107. There are also some useful contributions tucked away in D. Tabachovitz, *Textkritische und Sprachliche Studien zur Chronik des Theophanes Confessor* (Diss. Uppsala 1926). Naturally I have worked from the texts of de Boor, *Theophanes a.m.* 6024, pp. 181.30-184.1, and Maas, 'Metrische Akklamationen der Byzantiner', *BZ* xxi (1912), 31-3, cf. 49-51, though I have not followed either throughout.

² On the accent see *Porphyrius*, p. 77.

Translation

Greens. Long may you live, Justinian Augustus! May you always conquer!¹ I am wronged, best of emperors, and cannot endure my burdens, God knows. I fear to name the oppressor, lest he prosper the more and I endanger my own safety [5].

Manadator. Who is he? We do not know.

<*Greens*>. My oppressor, O thrice august, is to be found in the quarter of the shoemakers.²

Mandator. No one is doing you any wrong.

Greens. It is one man and one man alone who does me wrong. Mother of God, may he be humbled [10].³

Mandator. If there is such a man, we know not who he is.

Greens. It is Calopodius the spathar who wrongs me, Lord of all [15].

Mandator. Calopodius is innocent.⁴

Greens. If he is not, he will share the fate of Judas. God will requite him swiftly for my wrongs.

Mandator. You come, not to watch the games, but to insult your masters [20].

Greens. If anyone wrongs me, he will share the fate of Judas.

Mandator. Be silent, Jews, Manichaeans, and Samaritans!

Greens. Do you insult us with the name of Jews and Samaritans? The Mother of God is with us all.

Mandator. How long will you go on bringing down curses on your own head?

*The Greens shouted among each other and, on the bidding of Antlas, chanted:*⁵

¹ του βίκας. On this formula see *Porphyrus*, 77-9, 248.

² Not a true address, but a play on the oppressor's name, Calo-podius. There seems to me no reason whatever to suppose (e.g. with Karlin-Hayter, *Byz.* 1973, 87, n.2) that Calopodius is not the man's true name. It is (as she admits) a common eunuch's name, and what would be the point in the Greens concealing the name of the man they are protesting about?

³ So Bury² for μη ἀνακεφαλίση ('let him never raise his head' in 1889).

⁴ K. οὐκ ἔχει πρᾶγμα. 'C. has no concern with you' *et sim.* earlier translators, but cf. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* p. 165.26, ἐγὼ τὸ δὲ εἶπον, ὅτι οὐκ ἔχω πρᾶγμα². ἀναίτιος γὰρ εἶμι, and other passages quoted by Tabachovitz, pp. 29-30.

⁵ οἱ δὲ Πράσινοι ἐβόησαν ἐπάνω (?) ἀλλήλων καὶ ἔκραζον ὡς ἐκέλευσεν Ἀντλας. Antlas is evidently the *chef du clique* of the Greens (see p. 259), whether or not yet officially called demarch. It is building on sand indeed to punctuate after ἔκραζον (with Jarry, *Hér. et factions*, p. 139) and take Antlas to be an otherwise unknown heresiarch who ordered a particular form of baptism.

If anyone denies that our Lord the emperor is orthodox [25],¹ let him be anathema as Judas.

Mandator. I say to you, are you baptized in the name of one God?²

Greens. I *am* baptized in the name of one God.³

Mandator. Really, if you refuse to be silent, I shall have you be-headed!

Greens. Everybody is eager to win office to secure his own safety [30].⁴

Your majesty must not be angry at what I may say in my tribulation. For God listens patiently to all entreaties.⁵ It is with right on our side (λόγον ἔχοντες) that we now spell out all (ὀνομάζομεν πάντα). We do not know,⁶ thrice august, where either the palace is or the government [? ceremonial⁷] of the state. If I come into the city once, it is sitting on a mule⁸— and I wish I had not come then, thrice august [40].

Mandator. Everybody is free to move about in public (δημοσιεύει) wherever he wishes without danger.

Greens. I know all about (θαρρῶ) freedom—yet I'm not allowed to use it! And if any 'free' man⁹ is suspected of being a Green, he is sure to be publicly punished [45].

¹ See p. 142 for the meaning of this elliptic phrase.

² It is surely more natural to place a question-mark here, than to take it as either a statement (Karlín-Hayter) or an imperative (Bury and others).

³ Probably *not*, as Bury and many since have assumed, a monophysite allusion: see p. 141.

⁴ An abrupt transition; is it possible that something explaining this reference to seeking of office (presumably the office which is now protecting Calopodius) has fallen out of the text? It is not easy to take the ἀρχή as the emperor's, nor would that explain the transition to his hoped for patience.

⁵ Tabachovitz (pp. 50-2) ingeniously attributes to the Mandator τὸ θεῖον γὰρ πάντων ἀνέχεται, 'Yes (*sc.* I will listen), for God puts up with all things', and takes ἡμεῖς λόγον ἔχοντες to mean 'relying on that promise' (parallels, pp. 51-2). But this would be an unwontedly conciliatory reply for the Mandator—and certainly a promise he did not keep long (cf. l. 46). And while all would concede that γὰρ so used is common in the dialogue of Greek drama and Plato, is it a Byzantine usage?

⁶ I am ignoring Maas's excision (followed by Bury²) of ll. 34-5, and punctuating ποῦ ἔστιν, ἡμεῖς οὐκ οἶδαμεν, οὐδε . . .

⁷ κατάστασις, as in the exchange between the Blues and Phocas' representative discussed p. 252 above. It is usually taken (see p. 88) to mean 'government'—though one wonders what sort of government it is the location of which the Greens avow ignorance of (i.e. which buildings in addition to the palace). Naturally, scholars have assumed (implausibly, Ch. XI) that the Greens have been 'kept out of politics'. The simpler and more natural inference from their protest is that they have been excluded from the palace, where they normally took part along with the Blues in the imperial ceremonial (see pp. 251 f.).

⁸ i.e. being led to execution.

⁹ In view of this heavily ironic emphasis on a 'freedom' that is denied to the Greens, it is striking to find the Blues, in two epigrams from the last monument of

Mandator. Have you no care for your immortal souls that you thus brave death?

Greens. Just let the (Green) flag be lifted¹ and goodbye justice. Do away with the murdering and allow us to be punished legally. Look, an abundant fountain—punish as many as you like! Truly, human nature cannot tolerate the two together [50].² Oh, that Sabbatius³ had never been born, to have a son who is a murderer! This is the twenty-sixth⁴ murder committed in the Zeugma.⁵ In the morning he was watching the races, in the afternoon he was murdered, Lord of all.

Blues. You are the only party in the hippodrome⁶ that has murderers among you.

Greens. You murder and then run away [55].

Blues. You murder and then stir up trouble. *You're* the only party in the hippodrome that has murderers among you.

Greens. Lord Justinian, they challenge us and no one murders them. No one can fail to see that!⁷ Who killed the woodseller in the Zeugma, Emperor? [60]

Mandator. You killed him.

Greens. Who killed the son of Epagathus, Emperor?

Mandator. You killed him yourselves, and you are falsely accusing the Blues.

Greens. Now indeed have pity on us. O Lord God! The truth is being suppressed. I'd like to argue with those who say that affairs are managed by God [66]. If so, whence this misfortune of ours?

Mandator. God cannot be tempted with evil (James 1:13).

Greens. God cannot be tempted with evil? Then who is wronging me? Will some philosopher or hermit kindly explain the distinction? [70]

Mandator. Accused blasphemers, will you never hold your tongue!

Porphyrus, described as *ἐλευθερόπαις Βενέτων . . . δῆμος* and *δῆμος ἐλεύθερος* (*Anth. Plan.* 359.5, 360.3). Perhaps it was a motif that recurred in many such hippodrome dialogues of this period (whenever that was). Porphyrus' last base seems to belong c.545 (*Porphyrus*, p. 178). This seems to me a conclusive argument against P. Karlin-Hayter's attempt to emend *ἐλευθερία* here to *ἀληθεία*.

¹ *ἐπαρθῆ τὸ χρώμα τοῦτο.*

² i.e. indiscriminate murder and legal justice.

³ Justinian's father.

⁴ *εἰκοστός ἔκτος*] *εἰκότως* several MSS and de Boor.

⁵ For the Zeugma, p. 87 above.

⁶ *σταδίου*, for the Byzantine but not for us merely a synonym for hippodrome.

⁷ *νοήσει ὁ μὴ θέλων*, which I take to mean 'even he who is unwilling will see', cf. *στέγω καὶ μὴ θέλων* in 74). 'Truth will compel assent', rather loosely Bury; ('voyons, raisonnons' (?), Diehl.

Greens. If it is your Majesty's pleasure, I shall keep my peace, though against my will, thrice august. I know all, but I say nothing [75]. Farewell justice, you are no more! I shall cross over and become a Jew! Better to be a pagan than a Blue, God knows!

Blues. I abominate you, I cannot abide to look at you.¹ Such malice appalls me [80].

Greens. Let the bones of the spectators be dug up!²

THE DATE AND SOURCE OF THE DIALOGUE

Despite Maas's decisive demonstration to the contrary,³ historians continue to insist that the dialogue forms part of the antecedents of the Nika revolt: most notably (and forcibly) E. Stein,⁴ most recently P. Karlin-Hayter.⁵

The only source to record the dialogue in full is Theophanes (we shall be returning below to the excerpt in the *Chron. Pasch.*). Now Theophanes' section on the revolt comprises three quite separate accounts, juxtaposed with only superficial (and disastrous) attempts at harmonization: (a) 181.26–31 de Boor; (b) 181.32–184.2; (c) 184.3–186.2. (a) is a six-line summary of the whole affair; (b) is our dialogue; and (c) is another but fuller account of the whole affair.

Now there are a number of serious objections to taking (b) at its face value in this context. In the first place it is quite irreconcilable with (c) as an account of the origins of the revolt. (c) is basically the version of Malalas,⁶ beginning with the city prefect's unsuccessful attempt to impale the Blue and Green prisoners. (b) is a dialogue between the Greens and the emperor in which the Greens complain that they are being terrorized by the Blues and can get no redress from the emperor. Nothing in it has anything to do with any of the known circumstances of the Nika revolt. The bitter hostility between

¹ τὸ (?δ) μισῶ οὐ θέλω βλέπειν.

² A concluding flourish, after which the Greens, insultingly enough, walked out *en masse* (καὶ κατήλθον οὗτοι καὶ ἔασαν τὸν βασιλεῖα καὶ τοὺς Βενέτους θεωροῦντας). The curse is standard, paradoxically meaning 'let them be killed'. Cf. (e.g.) ἀνασκαφῆ τὰ ὀστέα τῶν εἰκόνων (of the Iconoclasts), Nicephorus, *contra Euseb. et Ebrith.*, ed. Pitra, *Spic. Sol.* iv.306; ἀνασκαφῆ τὰ ὀστέα Ἰουστινιανοῦ, Theophanes, A.M. 6187; ἀνασκαφεῖη τὰ ὀστέα τοῦ Καλαφάτου, Cedrenus ii.537; and several translated from the Syriac of John of Ephesus, 'out with the bones of the dicasts' (at a trial), iii.31, and 'out with the bones of the heathens' (*ibid.*); 'out with the bones of the Arians', 'dig from their graves the bones of the Arians', *ibid.* iii.26.

³ *BZ* 1912, 49–51.

⁴ *Bas-Empire* ii (1949), 450, n.1.

⁵ *Byz.* 1973, 85f.

⁶ For the relationship between the sources for the revolt see (still) Bury, *JHS* 1897, 92f., mistaken only in the matter of the source of the dialogue, though he saw clearly that there was something amiss with the relevant section of the *Chron. Pasch.* (p. 98).

Blues and Greens that it manifests scarcely foreshadows their collaboration over the issue of the prisoners. And although Justinian took no notice of the allegations against Calopodius in the dialogue, the Greens apparently forget all about him once the revolt begins.

To meet these objections, it has been suggested that, as a consequence of the Green complaints, Justinian realized that he must be more impartial in future. So he was careful to have both Blues and Greens arrested after their next riot,¹ and this was the occasion of the unsuccessful executions that led to the revolt. To this hypothesis it must be objected that the general tenor and especially the conclusion of the dialogue make such an immediate change of heart on Justinian's part most improbable. He rejects Green complaints against both the Blues and himself and openly sides with the Blues.

The dialogue *may* have taken place a few days before the arrests and executions, but there seems no serious possibility of actually connecting it with the arrests and executions in such a way that the dialogue could in any meaningful sense be said to be the *origin* of the revolt (γένεσις . . . τρόπω τοιούτῳ). The supposed religious arguments for dating the dialogue to 532² seem to me too fragile to permit serious discussion; the references to Manichees, Jews, pagans, and the like amount to no more than the stock religious abuse of the age, of no contemporary or theological significance whatever.

What now of the excerpt in the *Paschal Chronicle*, proving (or so it might appear) that Theophanes and the *Chronicle* drew it from a common source, a source which would naturally have had to be earlier than the *Paschal Chronicle* (early seventh century), and so probably as early as our most important other chronicle source, Malalas?

Maas, however, pointed out that this excerpt is an interpolation, an interpolation (so he argued) from Theophanes, no less. Perhaps because of the succinctness of his exposition, Maas's arguments seem not to have been understood by his critics. That the interpolation derives from Theophanes is a secondary (but still certain) conclusion, independent of the proofs of the interpolation, which are two (both decisive), one internal, the other external.

¹ The very same evening, according to Bury (*JHS* 1897, 118). Elsewhere, he sketched in the background: 'When the Greens marched out of the hippodrome, the Emperor sitting in the cathisma was left for a few moments alone with the Blues; but they quickly followed their enemies, and street conflicts ensued' (*Later Roman Empire* ii¹ (1889), 59). All pure conjecture, designed to lead up to the arrest 'that evening' that provoked the revolt. Bury dated the dialogue and executions to 10 January, Karlin-Hayter to the 11th, while Stein allowed that the dialogue might have taken place 'a few days' before the executions.

² Most recently Karlin-Hayter, *Byz.* 1973, 88f.; see above pp. 140 f.

(1) *Chron. Pasch.* 620.4–13 records the first seven exchanges of the dialogue and then summarizes the rest as follows: ‘Then after many insults between the Blues and Greens and much abuse of the emperor, the Greens departed, leaving the emperor and the Blues watching the races.’ Then without any pause, the narrative continues as follows: ‘And the emperor sent <someone> to discover what they (? the Greens) were chanting.’ After this (at least in the bastard text printed in the Bonn edition) two sentences rather puzzlingly restating the contents of this last sentence before Justinian’s orders are obeyed; then Basilides the patrician leaves the *palace* (we left Justinian watching the races in the hippodrome) and discovers that the people are agitating for the deposition of Eudaemon, John the Cappadocian and Tribonian (not Calopodius!). That is to say, we have passed to the *second* day of the revolt (p. 279). There is worse to come. For according to the text as it stands, it can only be the Greens who are agitating against the three officials, since the Blues are still supposed to be in the hippodrome with Justinian. This we know to be false, because the Blues and Greens joined forces on the *first* day and refused to accept Justinian’s offer of more races on the second day (p. 278).

There is no need to say more. There is obviously something seriously wrong with the text. We need only look at the relevant page of the only MS. (Vat. gr. 1941) to see what has happened.

The narrative of the first hand ends in the year 529/30 with the word *χρημάτων* (p. 620.2 Bonn), half-way down fol. 241^v. It resumes on fol. 243^r with these words:

... ὡς ἔτυχεν. ἀλλ’ ὅτε πολλή γένηται ἀνάγκη,
τότε ποιεῖς ἃ ἐβουλεύσω.” καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ
βασιλεὺς. “ἐξέλθατε οὖν καὶ μάθετε τίνος χάριν
στασιάζουσιν.” καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἀπὸ τοῦ παλατίου ὁ
πατρικίος Βασιλίδης . . .

Evidently a whole folium was missing from V’s exemplar, containing no doubt a few random items from the year 531 and the beginning of the Nika revolt. When V¹ picks up again, we are in the middle of a council of war in the palace on the second day. The empty space originally left on fol. 242^v was subsequently filled up in a different (but probably contemporary)¹ hand with some curious odds and ends: an account of an earthquake in 723/3 and a list of the Muses. But *above* the text space on this page, in the upper margin, the first

¹ So Maas on palaeographical grounds; it can be added that V¹ would presumably have written his excerpt from the dialogue in the text space of fol. 242^v rather than the margin if it had still been empty.

hand then copied the first seven exchanges of the dialogue and the summary of the rest quoted above.

Where did he find this material? Hardly from an intact MS. of his main source, since the words he quotes do not either constitute a proper introduction to the revolt or join up properly with the point where his own narrative begins again. To cobble the gap he wrote an abrupt sentence of his own (καὶ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἰδεῖν τί κράζουσιν) to *replace* the words ὡς ἔτυχεν . . . στασιάζουσιν. The scribe of Monacensis 557, copied direct from V, appreciated his predecessor's intention and duly omitted these words so as to give an intelligible (though of course historically unsatisfactory) narrative.

It seems then that the original text of the *Paschal Chronicle* did *not* contain the dialogue. V's source for the excerpt quoted need be no earlier now than the date of V itself (probably tenth century). Thus Theophanes immediately becomes a serious possibility—and not only because of the close verbal parallels between the two versions of the dialogue and the introduction to it.

The account of the earthquake of 723/4 quoted on the very same page fol. 242^v was taken from Theophanes (412.6f.).¹ It is introduced with the rubric ἐκ τοῦ μεγάλου χρονογράφου. Stein, apparently thinking that it was the excerpt from the dialogue that is so cited, objects that 'le μέγας χρονογράφος n'est certes pas Théophane ainsi que Maas le prétend avec témérité, mais très vraisemblablement Jean d'Antioche', quoting *Chron. Pasch.* 694 as a parallel. *dormitat Homerus*. A chronicler who stopped at the year 610 cannot have mentioned an event of 723/4! In this case at least the 'great chronographer' *must* be Theophanes. As for *Chron. Pasch.* 694, it does indeed contain another marginal excerpt (concerning Maurice's dealings with the Avars) taken ἐκ τοῦ μεγάλου χρονογράφου. Here John of Antioch (who is full on Maurice) is a theoretical possibility,² but (quite apart from the improbability of μέγας χρονογράφος being used of two different chroniclers) this long excerpt does correspond very closely indeed with the text of Theophanes (278.32–279.8 and 280.5–9).

We may conclude, then, that one at least of the scribes who worked on V had access to a text of Theophanes and copied excerpts from it into the MS. The reasonable and economical answer to the problem of the dialogue is surely that this too came from Theophanes.

¹ See Maas, p. 47, n.2.

² Our only relevant fragment of John (106, *Exc. de Insid.* p. 147) has nothing in common with the excerpt. R. Spintler, *de Phoca imperatore Romanorum* (Diss. Jena 1905), 9f., discusses the relationship between John and Theophanes for these years in some detail, concluding that Theophanes did not often use John directly (Stein's claim would require that Theophanes and the excerptor in V copied John word for word). Spintler perhaps makes insufficient allowance for the fact that we have only excerpts of John, but in general I suspect that he is right.

It follows that Theophanes, writing in the ninth century, is our earliest source for a dialogue which, though allegedly the 'immediate' cause of the revolt (*καὶ εὐθὺς συνέβη* . . . 184.3), is (a) unknown to the numerous contemporary sources, (b) irreconcilable with the version of contemporary sources, and (c) ill adjusted to and irreconcilable with the main part of Theophanes' own version. Perhaps the suggestion that the dialogue is misplaced will seem less radical now.

Why did Theophanes put the dialogue where he did and where did he find it? Maas was content to assume a 'senseless and mechanical' interpolation (p. 49). It was Bury who spotted the key point, though without perceiving its implications.¹ His main account of the riot (184.3f.) Theophanes took from Malalas (473-7),² yet incredibly he *omitted* the hippodrome scene in which the Blues and Greens proclaimed their unity (474.1-14). Now how could even so unintelligent a man as Theophanes come to omit this vital detail, in truth the immediate cause of the riot? The answer is simple: Theophanes thought that the scene in the hippodrome described by Malalas was the *same* as the scene in which the Greens denounced Calopodius. He reckoned (mistakenly, of course) that he had made a great find; a verbatim transcript of the scene which Malalas had merely described. So naturally enough, thinking that he had already given a full transcript, he excised Malalas' description. The confirmation is provided by a detail observed but not exploited by Maas, Theophanes' adaptation of Malalas' introduction to the riot, which in Theophanes follows immediately after the dialogue:

<i>ἐν αὐτῷ δὲ τῷ χρόνῳ</i>	<i>καὶ εὐθὺς συνέβη</i>
<i>τῆς δεκάτης ἰνδικτιῶνος</i>	<i>γενέσθαι ὑπὸ τινων</i>
<i>συνέβη ὑπὸ τινων ἀλασ-</i>	<i>ἀλαστόρων³ πρόφασιν</i>
<i>τόρων δαιμόνων πρόφασιν</i>	<i>δημοτικῆς ταραχῆς . . .</i>
<i>γενέσθαι ταραχῆς . . .</i>	<i>(Theophanes, 184.3f.)</i>
<i>(Malalas, 473.5f.)</i>	

Malalas puts the cause of the riot very generally 'in the same year of the tenth indiction', i.e. 532. Theophanes puts it 'immediately' after the dialogue because he thought that the dialogue was the same interchange between factions and emperor on 13 January which Malalas had described as the start of the revolt.

It is now possible to see more clearly just why it is not only a

¹ *JHS* 1897, 102.

² For the details, Bury, pp. 101-4.

³ *μαϊστόρων*, the MSS., but as Bury saw (*BZ* vi (1897), 508), this must be a misreading of Malalas' *ἀλαστόρων* (Maas retained *μαϊστόρων*, thinking the error to be Theophanes' own).

mistake but a mistake of method to push the Calopodius dialogue back among the antecedents of the revolt. Theophanes connected it with the revolt only because he was under the impression that it was the exchange between factions and emperor which took place on the *first* day of the revolt. This was his *only* reason for describing the Calopodius dialogue as the cause of the revolt (181.32). Once his error is recognized, there is no further reason to connect it with the revolt at all, much less consider it a cause.

Where did Theophanes find the dialogue? As a verbatim report of an actual exchange between emperor and factions in the hippodrome, it must originally have come from faction archives. It was suggested above that faction records may not have provided much by way of context, which would explain why such acclamations so often tend (as here) to be attributed to false contexts (p. 246).

Now it is perhaps unlikely that Theophanes consulted faction archives direct (if so we might have expected more such quotations in his text, whereas the indication is that he took all or most or those he did quote from John of Antioch).¹ Maas thought that he took it from John, which would certainly be the simplest explanation, though such a disproportionately long direct quotation would be without parallel in a chronicle, and some quite alien source cannot be ruled out.

Maas was for dating it towards the end of Justinian's reign, on the basis of the anathema pronounced in ll. 25f. on those who denied that the emperor was orthodox, a pointer (Maas claimed) to the period when Justinian was slipping into Aphthartodocetism. But this is surely a quite unnecessary inference (p. 142). The most natural context for a document which proclaims the oppression of the Greens and the hostility of a Justinian who openly protects the Blues is the very beginning of his reign. The best commentary on the dialogue is *Secret History* § vii, even down to the hyperbole that the Greens were being forced to flee the city at this period (vii.22, cf. ll. 30f. above). Of course, if John of Antioch had recorded it under the same *indiction* year (which began on 1 Sept. 531) as the revolt, then Theophanes' error would be more understandable.

Now John of Antioch wrote *before* the publication of the *Chron. Pasch.* If then the dialogue *was* already in John, why be so perverse (it might be objected) as to insist that the *Chron. Pasch.* derived it from Theophanes rather than John? It must emphatically be stated that ultimate derivation from John would in no way solve the problems that confront us.

¹ Maas, p. 29, and for John's preoccupation with the factions, p. 298 above.

That the *Chron. Pasch.* did use John is probable enough. As Bury's minute analysis has shown,¹ Theophanes and *Chron. Pasch.* appear to have used a second common source in addition to their common use of Malalas, a source which would have to be earlier than *Chron. Pasch.* and would therefore be likely to be John. But we are not concerned with the source(s) of the *original* text of *Chron. Pasch.* here, which is lost beyond conjecture. We are only concerned with the excerpt a tenth-century scribe copied into the margin of his MS. from a source that was evidently *not* another MS. of *Chron. Pasch.*

In any case, if this source was John, then it would follow that Theophanes' amazing misconception about and mangling of the beginning of the revolt goes right back to the near-contemporary John (or at least to *Chron. Pasch.*), which is surely incredible. The central feature of Theophanes' account taken as a whole is his omission of the celebrated union of the 'merciful Prasinovenetoi' and his absurd substitution of the Calopodius dialogue (which he must have transcribed without reading)² for that scene. Now both these grave errors manifestly underlie the text of *Chron. Pasch.* as it was patched up by V¹. He has nothing to say about the Prasinovenetoi and evidently thought that the rioting of the revolt proper began *directly* after the Greens had left the hippodrome crying out 'let the bones of the spectators be dug up'.

Now the surviving part of the original text of *Chron. Pasch.* is visibly much influenced by Malalas. John of Antioch too must have used Malalas.³ Both were in any case close enough contemporaries to have heard by oral tradition of the Prasinovenetoi. The ignorant confusion of Theophanes' account can only be ascribed to Theophanes himself, a man (unlike John, as we have seen, p. 298) quite uninterested in the factions, who did his not very intelligent best to

¹ *JHS* 1897, 102-3. It is perhaps just possible to argue that their divergence over the degree of damage to Probus' house is due to Theophanes' careless reading of his source and that the reference to the house of Lausus slipped out of our MS. of *Chron. Pasch.*, in which case Theophanes could have been using *Chron. Pasch.* direct.

² In fairness to Theophanes it may be added that many modern scholars have made suggestions concerning the dialogue which betray similar ignorance of its contents: see pp. 141, 287.

³ The relevant Constantinian excerpt from Malalas opens, predictably enough, with the words, ὅτι εἰς τὸ δεύτερον ἔτος Ιουστινιανοῦ ἀντήραν αὐτῷ ὁ δῆμος τῶν λεγομένων Πρασινοβενέτων . . . (*Exc. de Insid.* p. 172.7). It is surprising (and frustrating) that no excerpt from John survives; to judge by the way the *Excerpta de Insidiis* pass from Anastasius to Phocas with one one-line entry each for Justinian and Justin II (frs. 104-5, p. 147), the text used by the excerptors was defective.

combine the versions of a variety of sources some 250 years after the event. Whether or not he took the dialogue from John of Antioch, it was Theophanes who inserted it into the story of the Nika revolt, and it was from Theophanes that V¹ took what he copied into his MS. of *Chron. Pasch.*¹

ITS METRICAL CHARACTER

Having vindicated (as I hope) one part of Maas's contribution to the problems of the dialogue, I close with some reservations on the other, more famous half of his paper: the claim that such acclamations were metrical. Such was Maas's wholly merited authority in the field of metre that his contention has always been accepted exactly as he formulated it, or rather as it has been assumed that he formulated it, for in his characteristically laconic manner Maas simply set out the relevant texts divided up into what he took to be their metrical units without a word of comment or any statement of general principle. It is perhaps this that has led to the exaggeration of his discovery.

P. Karlin-Hayter, for example, refers to the dialogue quite straightforwardly as a 'poem'.² Now it seems clear enough that the factional and other items from the tenth century that Maas analyses in § IX of his paper *are* poems (or songs). From the twelfth century there are a number of such pieces in political metre.³ We know that the factions had poets and sang songs to the accompaniment of music. There is a useful study of the various types of song by J. Handschin.⁴ It seems to me that Maas assimilated two different sorts of performance under the inexact title 'metrical acclamations'. These formal songs are metrical—but hardly acclamations. On the other hand, acclamations such as we are here concerned with are (I would suggest) intermittently rhythmical rather than metrical.

¹ This sort of thing is by no means without parallel in Theophanes. For example, he inserts the famous speech Justin II made when he appointed Tiberius Caesar in 574 (taken almost verbatim from Simocatta iii.11) into an account of Tiberius' elevation to the rank of *Augustus*, which he mistakenly places in 577. In fact Tiberius was made Augustus in 578, as Theophanes himself goes on to record again under that year. All these errors and contradictions could have been avoided if only Theophanes had taken the trouble to read the context in the passage of Simocatta from which he took the speech.

² *Festschrift M. Richard*, to appear.

³ See M. J. Jeffreys, *DOP* 1974, 177 f. Theodoros Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte* (ed. W. Hörandner, 1974), 79f. and nos. IV, V, IX–XIV, XXXI–XXXIII.

⁴ *Das Zeremonienwerk Kaiser Konstantins und die sangbare Dichtung* (1942); cf. too E. Wellesz, *Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, Ch. IV.

No one is going to question Maas's analysis of (say) lines 34–40 of the Calopodius dialogue:

ἡμεῖς λόγον ἔχοντες, αὐτοκράτωρ, ὀνομάζομεν ἄρτι πάντα.
 ποῦ ἔστιν ἡμεῖς οὐκ οἶδαμεν
 οὐδὲ τὸ παλάτιν, τρισαύγουστε,
 οὐδὲ πολιτείας κατάστασις·
 μίαν εἰς τὴν πόλιν προέρχομαι,
 ὅταν εἰς βορδώνιν καθέζομαι·
 εἶθις μηδὲ τότε, τρισαύγουστε.

The last five lines all contain 10 syllables with word break after the sixth and regular paroxytone and proparoxytone accents respectively at the ends of the two halves. But the lines that introduce this highly rhetorical and obviously rehearsed catalogue of woes do not. In general, the less formal and the more angry the exchange, the less isosyllaby and accent fixing we find. For example, in the whole of the last third of the dialogue, when the Blues join in and tempers are lost on all sides, there is little trace of such regularity, as can be seen from Maas's complicated notation studded with question marks.

Karlin-Hayter claims that the principal part of the dialogue is a poem composed in advance, built up in regular strophes and possessing an overall unity. While not denying that the Greens will have given some thought to what they were proposing to say, I would maintain that the greater part of the dialogue—inevitably so in a 'live' exchange—is improvised.

For example, the section quoted above will certainly have been prepared; the Greens had planned all along to complain about Calopodius. But they can hardly have anticipated the Mandator's replies, and the course of their complaints is sharply diverted by his sudden interjection 'Silence, Jews, Manichaeans and Samaritans', which they naturally feel bound to repudiate. It is surely no coincidence that there is no metrical pattern whatever in these lines (22–9). After this the Greens resume with their prepared material (including 36–40) until the Mandator's reply at 41: 'everyone is free to go wherever he wishes without danger'. Now the Greens cannot have known that he would use the word *ἐλεύθερος*, yet they pick it up at once with bitter irony:

41 καὶ θαρρῶ ἐλευθερίας καὶ ἐμφανίσαι οὐ συγχωροῦμαι.
 καὶ εἴαν <τις> ἔστιν ἐλεύθερος,
 ἔχει δὲ Πρασίνων ὑπόληψιν,
 45 πάντως εἰς φανερόν κολάζεται.

The *τις* Maas added in 42 is a stylistic improvement as well as filling

out the line to 10 syllables, but we cannot be sure it is what the Greens said. They *must* have improvised 42–5. Now by improvise I do not mean to imply that the lines were simply invented on the spot. No one who reads the dialogue carefully can fail to notice how very formulaic it is; e.g. three 10-syllable lines end with the conveniently accented quadrosyllable *τρισαύγουστε* (7, 36, 40, and cf. Maas's § III.2.2). And with 32,

cf. 73,
 μὴ ἀγανακτήσῃ τὸ κράτος σου
 ἂν θεραπεύεται τὸ κράτος σου.

Variations on this deferential formula doubtless occurred in almost any petition to the emperor.

When the Greens mention the 26th murder in the Zeugma the Blues interrupt (unmetrically). To the sharp Green sally:

πότε σφάζεις καὶ ἀποδημεῖς

comes the no less sharp Blue rejoinder:

σύ δὲ σφάζεις καὶ διακινεῖς.

It is not likely that this particular exchange was specially composed or even improvised for this occasion. In any case, the reply more or less composes itself, the only variable being the verb to balance *ἀποδημεῖς*. For those who had devoted years to the art, this sort of improvisation was no doubt second nature.¹

As to how it was done, common sense suggests that the *chef* (in this case we actually know his name, Antlas) stood facing his 'choir'² and cued them. As the Mandator delivered the emperor's reply or the Blues their insult, he would improvise a reply and mouth it for his fellows to repeat.³ In many cases the reply would be too obvious and familiar for this to be necessary. The mutual abuse of the factions must have become pretty predictable over the years, and it is

¹ There is a fascinating anthology of modern football 'acclamations' in Simon Jacobson's 'Chelsea rule—okay', *New Society*, 27 March 1975, pp. 780–83. Almost all are perversions or adaptations of popular songs and hymns; the alert fan can pick up a new taunt instantly provided that it fits a familiar pattern or rhythm. 'It is extraordinary', concludes Jacobson, 'that an anarchic, disorganized mob, virtually without leadership, and apparently to no real purpose, can look and sound so awesome' (p. 783). The improvisation of the Byzantine factions must have been much more sophisticated than this.

² How many took part in either acclamations or songs is quite uncertain; cf. Handschin, pp. 72f. and F. Dölger, *BZ* 1943, 218–27, for the songs. Many more may have chanted the acclamations.

³ The *ἔκραζον ὡς ἐκέλευσεν Ἀντλας* at 28 shows clearly enough that the indignant reply *εἰς ἓνα βαπτίζομαι* to the Mandator's allegation that they are not orthodox was made at the 'bidding' of Antlas.

likely enough that much of our dialogue had been heard many times.

Isosyllaby and accent regulation were clearly aimed at where possible, but not invariably or even regularly. Compare the following two loyal addresses to Maurice, first from the Blues:

‘Ο θεός, ἀτοκράτωρ, ὁ κελεύσας σὲ βασιλεύειν
 ὑποτάξει σοι πάντα πολεμοῦντα τὴν βασιλείαν.
 εἰ δὲ Ῥωμαῖός ἔστιν, εὐεργέτα, ἀγνωμονῶν σε,
 εἰς δουλείαν σου τούτον ὑποτάξει χωρὶς αἱμάτων.

Absolute isosyllaby and perfect accent regulation—at least in Maas’ text. In fact Theophanes (p. 287) omits the vocatives in 1 and 3, adds a τὸν after πάντα in 2 and a ὁ before ἀγνωμονῶν in 3, while Simocatta (viii.7.9) omits the σοῦ in 4. Simocatta’s two vocatives we should probably keep and Theophanes’ τὸν we can probably do without; but I for one would prefer to do without the σοῦ as well and insert his ὁ in 3 (cf. ὁ πλεονεκτονῶν με and ὁ ἀδικῶν με, lines 7 and 69 in the dialogue,¹ and ὁ φιλῶν σε in Maas § III.4.1), which would of course destroy the isosyllaby.²

Now for the Greens:

Κωνσταντίνος και Δο- μεντζίολος,
 δέσποτα Ῥωμαίων τρισάγουστε,
 τῷ οἰκείῳ σου δήμῳ παρενοχλοῦσιν,
 ἵνα ὁ Κροῦκίς διοικήσῃ εἰς ἃς ἔχομεν ἀμαρτίας.
 ὁ θεός ὁ τά πάντα δημιουργήσας
 ὑποτάξει σοι πάντα ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολέμιον
 ἐμφύλιόν τε καὶ ἀλλόφυλον χωρὶς αἱμάτων.

Only 1–2 match exactly, and that was achieved effortlessly enough by improvising an imperial apostrophe of the right length. For the rest, as Maas himself admits for once, ‘das Metrum ist . . . nicht mehr sicher zu bestimmen’.

The two pieces make an interesting comparison. The first, whatever its metre, is perhaps nearer in tone to a poem than an acclamation (it is indeed called an ᾠδή by Simocatta). In the second the Greens have taken the opportunity of incorporating some personal complaints into what is in other respects much the same set of stock formulae differently arranged. One was performed directly after the other, and yet one is much less ‘metrical’ than the other.

¹ For Κελοπόδιος . . . ἀδικεῖ με in 15 the *Chron. Pasch.* offers κ. . . ὁ ἀδικῶν ἡμᾶς.

² Compare M. Jeffrey’s discussion of the even graver textual variants to Maas III.1, which Jeffrey argues to be in Ur-political verse (*DOP* 1975, 188).

To return to our dialogue, it takes another turn, which the Greens cannot have foreseen, at l. 68 when the Mandator says 'God cannot be tempted by evil (James 1.13)'. The Green reply brings forth further cries of indignation from the Mandator at their blasphemy, and this is what tempts them to scandalize him further by their mischievous (and of course not *serious*) threats to become Jews or pagans rather than Blues.

How is it possible to believe that more than half a dozen consecutive lines of this had been in any real sense prepared? There is a unifying thread to at least the Green side of the dialogue; their sense of injustice. But it is a *genuine* dialogue, whose course is determined by what the interlocutors say. Where they can they say it rhythmically, improvising from a large stock of frequently used formulae and (very occasionally) reciting short passages they may have composed specially.

APPENDIX D

The colours of imperial tombs

In the course of an attempt to solve the insoluble and in any case unimportant question of the factional allegiance of Leo I, J. Jarry¹ advances two arguments worth momentary consideration against Dvornik's arbitrary assumption that he was a Blue.²

(a) The *Par. Synt. Chron.* (p. 20.16 Preger) quotes an acclamation addressed to 'Leo Makelles' (i.e. Leo I) by the Greens after his restoration of part of the city wall.

It is not even necessary to point out that this would be insufficient to prove Leo a Green himself (p. 104), for the author of the *Parastaseis* has made one of his characteristic egregious errors. The restorer of the walls must be Leo III (717-41): it is most improbable that the walls would have needed restoring as early as Leo I (457-74), when they had just been restored by Theodosius II in 447, and the position of the reference to Leo in the *Parastaseis* implies that his restoration followed the rebuilding of the sea walls by Tiberius III (698-705) mentioned in the preceding sentence.

So the Green acclamation belongs in the context of the restoration carried out jointly by Leo III and his son Constantine V after the earthquake of 740.³

(b) Jarry points out that Leo I was buried in a green marble sarcophagus, which he takes to be at once an index of his own factional sympathies and the regular practice of 'Green' emperors. He cites the parallel of the Green Zeno, likewise buried in a green sarcophagus, and then refers generally to the Bonn edition of *De Sepulchris Imperatorum* 'passim', as though this treatise contained abundant further confirmation.

If this were indeed the case, it would certainly be an interesting discovery, for, thanks to a variety of redactions and translations of the catalogue of imperial tombs originally compiled by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, we know the colour of the tombs of the majority of Byzantine emperors over six centuries.⁴

¹ *Syria* 1960, 350. ² *BM* 1946, 126.

³ See Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*² (1964), 269, 273-4, 276, and 277 for the inscriptions attesting this restoration.

⁴ Thanks to the *Life of St. John the Almsgiver* (§ 19) we also know that emperors were asked to specify what sort of tomb they wanted before their coronation, as a reminder of their mortality.

With the aid of an excellent recent collation and critical discussion of these versions by Philip Grierson,¹ it is easy to see that there is no such correspondence as Jarry supposed. Theodosius II, for example, the archetypal Green emperor, was buried in a *red* tomb (i.e. porphyry: Grierson, p. 43). His successor Marcian, a Blue, was also buried in porphyry (p. 44). Justin I, who if not a Blue himself certainly countenanced Justinian's notorious partisanship for the Blues, was buried in a green tomb (p. 45–6). Heraclius, a Green, was buried in white (p. 48).² Theophilus, who actually competed in his own triumphal games of 837 as a Blue,³ was buried in green (p. 57). Michael III, who drove as a Blue in his private hippodrome,⁴ was buried in white (p. 57).

There are manifestly too many exceptions to establish any connection. In any case, despite the preponderance of Blue over Green emperors, not one blue sarcophagus happens to be recorded. Furthermore, every eastern emperor from Constantine to Marcian was buried in porphyry, though not one of them is known to have favoured the Reds. There is unfortunately some uncertainty about the sort of marble used for the tomb of the only certain Red emperor, Anastasius (cf. p. 45), but it was *not* porphyry. Nor was it by choice that emperors after Marcian turned to the cheaper medium of ordinary marble, but because their supply of porphyry ran out.⁵ But for this *all* imperial tombs might have been red.

¹ 'The Tombs and Obits of the Byzantine Emperors (337–1042)', *DOP* xvi (1962), 1–60.

² Perhaps the white sarcophagus excavated in 1969 and identified as Heraclius' by Mango: see *Annual of the Arch. Museums of Istanbul* xv/xvi (1969), 308–9 with fig. 1.

³ *Geo. Mon.* p. 707 Muralt (= PG cx.1017).

⁴ *Theoph. Contin.* p. 835.

⁵ Vasiliev, 'Imperial Porphyry Sarcophagi', *DOP* iv (1948), 20 (and cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 4).

APPENDIX E

The colours in Corippus (*Laud. Just.* i.319–29)

As transmitted, the text clearly links White with Green (and so, by implication, Red with Blue). And, unlike Malalas (p. 64), Corippus is certainly writing of Constantinople; to be precise, of the races held there to celebrate the accession of Justin II in November 565.

But there are serious difficulties to these pairings in the passage in question, quite apart from the fact that they do not accord with our other evidence from Constantinople. First, Corippus lists all four colours in the regular order, each major colour followed by its normal associate: Green, Red, Blue, White. Next, he equates each colour with a season, so that his order corresponds with the normal sequence: spring, summer, autumn, winter. Here is the passage, duly subdivided with lemmata to facilitate comprehension and reference:

aurigas totidem [i.e. four], totidem posuere colores,
et fecere *duas* studia in contraria *partes*,
ut sunt aestivis brumalis frigora flammis.

(A particularly clear illustration of the division of the four colours into two *partes* inside as well as outside the Hippodrome.)

Green(=spring)

nam viridis vernis campus ceu concolor herbis,
pinguis oliva comis, luxu nemus omne virescit;

Red(=summer)

russeus aestatis rubra sic veste refulgens
ut nonnulla rubent ardenti poma colore;

Blue(=autumn)

autumni venetus ferrugine dives et ostro
maturas uvas, maturas signat olivas;

White(=winter)

acquirerans candore nives hiemisque pruinam
albicolor *viridi* socio coniungitur una.

It will be seen that everything conspires to imply that Corippus is using the normal pairings right up till the last line (329), where, having already given Green its allotted two lines at the beginning of the list, he pulls it out of the hat again to link it with White. An editor quite unconcerned with the problem here under discussion (J. Partsch) was so perturbed by the absence of a similar link between Red and Blue, that he posited a lacuna after 329 in which he supposed it to have been expressed—a suggestion taken seriously by Corippus' next editor (M. Petschenig). Their instinct was sound, but the solution mistaken. Even granted such a lacuna, it would still be odd for Corippus to have listed the colours in an order which did not correspond with his pairings.

More serious is the question of the seasons. Like all such multiple analogies, this one has its weak point: Blue, which is less obviously autumnal¹ than Green is vernal, Red summery or White wintry. The only purpose of such a forced equation, quoted as it is to illustrate the twofold partition of the four factions, is that the pairings should be *appropriate*. It is obviously *not* appropriate that spring and winter should combine against summer and autumn. Indeed, not only is it inappropriate, it is positively excluded by Corippus' own introductory remark that the *partes* are divided *studia in contraria*,

ut sunt aestivis brumalia frigora flammis.

That is to say, his basic antithesis is summer versus winter. The combination spring/winter (Green/White) is neither *aestivae flammae* nor *brumalia frigora*. The natural and surely inevitable alliance is spring and summer versus autumn and winter. Compare the order in the versions of John the Lydian² (οἱ δὲ φασὶ πράσινον μὲν τὸ ἔαρ, ῥούσιον δὲ τὸ θέρος, βένετον δὲ τὸ φθινόπωρον, λευκὸν δὲ τὸν χεῖμωνα) and the Jewish Midrash,³ where the only difference is that, here as in the account of the spectators, Blue is given preference (Blue/autumn, White/winter, Green/spring, Red/summer).

All difficulties disappear, conceptual, stylistic, and historical alike, if we correct *viridi* in line 329 to *veneto*:

albicolor *veneto* socio coniungitur una.

Corippus is linking White with the immediately preceding Blue—autumn with winter. The link between Green and Red—spring and summer—is left implicit in their juxtaposition. Partsch's difficulty

¹ Though this was (perforce) well established in the tradition: 'Venetum caelo et mari vel autumno [consecraverunt]', Tert., *De Spect.* 9.6; cf. Cassiod., *Var.* iii.51.5 (as corrected by Soveri, cf. E. Castorina's edition of *De Spect.* (1961), p. 210). See now Averil Cameron's commentary ad loc.

² *De mens.* iii.26.

³ See above, p. 67.

about the lack of an explicit link between the other pair only existed while the implicit link did not correspond with their order. The corruption of an original *veneto* into *viridi* requires no 'parade of uncial type' in justification. It is a simple and common error: the confusion of two words of similar shape and prosody which begin with the same letter.

With Corippus corrected, all our evidence for sixth-century Constantinople is in agreement: Red was allied with Green, White with Blue.

APPENDIX F

Heraclius' second marriage

J. V. A. Fine Jr. has recently inferred from a passage in Nicephorus that, while the Greens disapproved of Heraclius' incestuous second marriage, the Blues lent him their support. From this he further infers (dubiously enough) that by 613 'it is evident that the Blues . . . have become supporters of the emperor in opposition to the Greens'.¹ Here is the passage as it is in the only manuscript available to de Boor for his Teubner edition of 1880:²

διήλεγχον δὲ αὐτοῦ μάλιστα τὸ ἄσεμνον συνοικέσιον ἐπὶ ταῖς ἵππικαῖς ἀμίλλαις καὶ οἱ τοῦ Πρασίου [sic] δημόται χρώματος† συνήνουν τε ἐπὶ ταύτῃ καὶ συνέπραττον.

de Boor was clearly right to mark the text corrupt (who is agreeing with whom?). Fortunately, however, another, earlier manuscript has since come to light, which gives the relevant passage as follows:³

διήλεγχον δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεψία παρανομίαν ἐφ' ἵππικοῦ ἀγνώωνος καὶ οἱ τοῦ Πρασίου χρώματος δημόται, καὶ κωλύειν τὴν συναφὴν ἐπειρώντο τὴν ἄθεσμον, οἱ δὲ τοῦ ἀντικειμένου χρώματος συνήνουν τε καὶ συνέπραττον.

It will be evident at a glance that the eye of the scribe of de Boor's MS. jumped straight from the first *χρώματος* to the second. The text now makes perfect sense:

Even⁴ the people of the Green colour disapproved of the illegal marriage with his niece at a race meeting, and tried to prevent the lawless union; those of the opposite colour agreed and cooperated [with them].

Yet Fine still declares it ambiguous ('with whom do the opposite colour acquiesce and co-operate?'), inserts into Orosz's text the *ἐπὶ ταύτῃ* of de Boor's text, which he takes to refer to the *συναφὴ* of the preceding clause (in Orosz's text), and translates: 'acquiesced and co-operated *about the marriage*', i.e. approved of it.

¹ *Sbornik Rad. Viz. Inst.* x (1967), 34.

² *Opusc. Hist.* p. 14 de Boor.

³ L. Orosz, *The London Manuscript of Nikephoros' "Breviarium"* (Budapest 1948), p. 21.

⁴ 'Even the Greens', because one might not have expected the Greens, Heraclius' own colour, to oppose him. Fine (p. 35) makes rather heavy weather of the *καὶ*.

It *may* be that ἐπὶ ταύτῃ (which makes no sense in de Boor's text) should be supplied in Orosz's, but when Orosz's text makes such perfect sense just as it stands and de Boor's is in any case corrupt, caution is indicated. The more so since, as Orosz has shown, the two manuscripts are *not* just two copies of the same text but two different redactions, the Orosz version being (as even this extract reveals) distinctly fuller. A forthcoming study by Cyril Mango will argue that both versions derive from Nicephorus; the de Boor text represents his own reworking of an earlier draft, the Orosz text. If so, then clearly we cannot combine them in this way.

But would the addition of ἐπὶ ταύτῃ make any real difference in any case? How could συνήγουν τε . . . ἐπὶ τῇ συναφῇ mean 'approved of the marriage'? If it means anything it must surely mean (as indeed Fine translated) 'agreed . . . about the marriage', which still leaves us with the question, with whom did they agree? Fortunately the answer to this question is very simple; συνήγουν and συνέπραττον can only refer back to the last named persons, namely the Greens.

This interpretation is put beyond doubt by the conclusion to the sentence (not quoted by Fine):

[καὶ] Σέργιος δὲ, ὁ κατὰ τὸ Βυζάντιον μυσταγωγός, γράμμασιν αὐτὸν ἐνουθέτει καὶ ἐλιπάρει τὴν πρὸς τὸ γύναιον τοῦτο κοινωνίαν ἀπαρνήσασθαι.

Sergius the patriarch added his disapproval as well. Now if the Greens disapproved of the marriage, the Blues approved, and Sergius disapproved, Nicephorus has surely expressed himself in a very confusing way. The most natural interpretation is that *both* colours *and* the patriarch *all* disapproved. The doublet συνήγουν τε καὶ συνέπραττον stresses the surprising fact that the two colours *did* co-operate over this issue.

So no 'changes of allegiance' under Heraclius.

APPENDIX G

Circus factions and Islamic futuwwa organizations

In an interesting recent paper¹ Sp. Vryonis Jr. has argued that the various futuwwa organizations of mediaeval Syria and Iran were descended from the circus factions of the Byzantine period. I can lay no claim to first-hand knowledge on the Islamic side, but to judge from the material he himself presents,² the similarities are not so close as he suggests.

If it is true, for instance, that these organizations, the *aḥdāth* ('young men'), 'ayyārūn ('rascals', 'vagabonds') and *fityān* ('young men'), were 'local urban groups which served as urban militia in defending their cities from foreign enemies . . . and protesting against demands of their own central government'³ (pp. 56, 47), then (as we have seen in Chs. V and XI) they are *not* really very similar to the factions. Least of all at the siege of Antioch in 540, on which Vryonis lays particular stress (pp. 52-3), do the factions appear as an 'urban militia'.⁴

Furthermore the futuwwa organizations appear to lack the two central features of the factions, while the factions lack the central feature of the futuwwa organizations.

The very *raison d'être* of the factions was the games, and the focus of all their activity was the hippodrome or theatre. The futuwwa were not partisans of popular entertainments.⁵ The other principal hallmark of factional activity was their bitter mutual rivalry. There is no trace of such persistent local rivalry inside the futuwwa organizations.

The futuwwa, according to Vryonis, 'appears in mediaeval Islam under the guise of an ideology centering about such virtues as bravery and generosity which associations of young men theoretically

¹ *BZ* lviii (1965), 46-59.

² Supplemented from the excellent article 'Futuwwa' by Cahen and Taeschner in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, ii (1965), 961f.

³ On their very varied activities at different times and places, see Cahen, *op. cit.* 961-3.

⁴ See p. 124 above, and W. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch* (1972), 263.

⁵ Indeed, the fact that individual members participated themselves in aristocratic sports (Cahen, *op. cit.* 964a) marks them off very sharply from the factions, partisans of mass *spectator* sports. It links the futuwwa rather with the *véoi* of pre-Byzantine times (p. 77), who occupied themselves with the aristocratic sports of the gymnasium.

cultivated' (p. 48; and cf. Cahen, 961). Whether or no the young men really did cultivate these virtues in historical times, the fact remains that there is nothing in the organization of the factions that could have inspired such an ethic.¹ That is to say, the *origin* of the futuwwa must surely have genuinely Islamic roots, so that the influence of the factions on its development could at best be only peripheral.

It must be added that for Vryonis's thesis to have any real plausibility, the factions must have 'continued to indulge their passion for civil strife' in the provinces overrun by the Arabs (p. 50) for much longer than we have any good reason to suppose they did. Their part in the proclamations of Leontius and Tiberius Apsimar (p. 267) in Constantinople, where they naturally persisted because of their essential role in the imperial ceremonial, in no way proves that they even existed outside Byzantine territory in the ninth or tenth century, when the futuwwa organizations first emerge. Indeed, they would only have continued till then if the Arabs had continued to provide chariot-racing and theatrical shows.

Lastly, the point on which Vryonis lays most weight, the coincidence that (a) *aḥdāth* and *fityān* both mean 'young men' and (b) the factions are often referred to as young men (see p. 75 above). But what more natural than that what in both cases were young men's associations should be called young men? In any case *νεανίαί* is *not*, as Vryonis suggests (p. 53), a 'terminus technicus' for the factions. Procopius *appears* so to use it in the passages Vryonis cites because, as a purist, he is deliberately avoiding the (to him) vulgar style by which the factions were properly known: *Πράσινοι, Βένετοι, δῆμοι, μέρη*, all foreign to the pages of the great classical historians he was imitating.

Throughout Hellenistic and early imperial times every city had its young men's associations explicitly and formally styled *νέοι* or *νεανίαί*,² associations which *did* have a religious focus and semi-military training.³ In this case it would naturally be absurd to suggest a direct link. The truth is surely that the Hellenistic *νέοι*, the Byzantine factions, and the Islamic futuwwa organizations were all different manifestations of an almost inevitable tendency in *any* society for the young to form their own associations. The only real parallel between the factions and the futuwwa, their proneness to

¹ This would remain true even if the factions did from time to time take part in the religious controversies of their day (and as we have seen there is little enough evidence that they did).

² C. E. Forbes, *Neoi* (1933), *passim*.

³ And cf. p. 341, n. 5 on their participation, like the futuwwa, in aristocratic sports.

rowdiness and rioting, is likewise a standard recurring feature of such groupings of the young, especially against a background of social change and uncertainty. Furthermore, the violence of the futuwwa seems to have been of a much more serious and political nature than that of the Blues and Greens.¹

¹ Cahen, 961-3.

APPENDIX H

Porphyrius refertus

This seems an appropriate place to list one or two corrections and additions to *Porphyrius the Charioteer*, an investigation which this book continues and completes (see in general the reviews by Ch. Delvoye, *L'Ant. Class.* 1973, 745; J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Épigr.* 1973, n.292 (p. 120); C. Walter, *REB* 1974, 409–10; M. Vickers, *JHS* 1974, 236–8; W. Liebeschuetz, *JRS* 1974, 233–4); C. Schneider, *BZ* 1974, 110–12; R. Keydell, *Gnomon* 1975, 292–5; T. W. Africa, *AHR* 1975, 378–9).

pp. 66/7: G. W. Bowersock and C. P. Jones point out that the inscription here published should be punctuated as follows: *τί πλέον εἶχες τῆς νίκης ταύτης | ἀνθρώποις ἐπιδιξαι εἰς Πράσινον | ἐλαύνων; κατεβίβασες τοὺς ἀντί σου. . .*

p. 73: There are many examples of *ἀντί* + gen. in the *Strategicon* of Maurice (?late 6th cent.). See the *index verborum* in Mihaescu's edition (1971), p. 386, and note particularly *οἱ ἀντί* for *οἱ ἐναντίοι* at pp. 82.19 and 304.17.

p. 81: A nice relief of a circus herald from Rome, shown holding a flag in his left hand and described in the accompanying epigram as 'delicium populi', has been published by S. Panciera, *Arch. Class.* xxii (1970), 151–63 with pl. lvii.2 (cf. *Année Épigr.* 1971 [1974], 21, n.44).

pp. 107–8: A. Turyn, 'Demetrius Triclinius and the Planudean Anthology', *Ἐπετ. Ἐταιρ. Βυζ. Σπουδ.* 1972/3 [1974], 403–50, has now identified the scribe of Par. gr. 2744 and placed the compilation of the MS. c. 1320. It was not thus executed directly under Planudes' supervision (which would explain the occasionally puzzling divergences from the Marcianus). On the other hand Turyn has detected Planudes' hand in the corrections of BM 16409, thus proving that this MS. was supervised by him. Turyn also proves that Par. gr. 2744 derives (as I had claimed) from Marc., not BM 16409. The article also casts much fresh light on the milieu when the unified anthology was put together and on its many Renaissance MSS. On the other Planudean MSS see now Turyn's *Dated Greek MSS of the 13th and 14th Centuries in the Libraries of Italy* (1972), 28–39, 90–96.

p. 153: C. P. Jones points out that I overlooked *πρῶτον ἴουλον* in Theocritus, xv. 85, which accordingly reduces a little the probability of the Christodoran echo in *Anth. Plan.* 336.6.

p. 168: Add the mime Porphyrius, dubiously martyred under Julian in Cappadocian Caesarea: cf. Ch. Van de Vorst, 'Une Passion inédite de S. Porphyre le mime', *Anal. Boll.* xxix (1910), 258–75. Also the seditious actor Faustinus of Athanasius, *Hist. Arian. ad mon.* 58, and the monument, crowned by a bronze *biga*, commemorating the generous gift of elephants to Lepcis Magna by a Porphyrius (J. M. Reynolds and J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Inscr. of Rom. Tripolitania* (1952), 159, no. 603). Perhaps (as Michael Vickers suggests) a successful charioteer.

p. 182: I unreservedly withdraw my suggestion that the Red and White *metae* protruded from the *spina*. They were presumably just areas of the *spina* itself.

pp. 184/5, 219/20: John of Ephesus (*HE* iii.24, p. 206 Payne-Smith) preserves an interesting satirical inscription put up by 'some of the city wits' on the tablet on a column Justin II was building in the Zeuxippus:

Build, build aloft thy pillar,
And raise it vast and high;
'Then mount and stand upon it,
Soaring proudly in the sky:
Eastward, south, and north and westward,
Wherever thou shalt gaze,
Nought thou'lt see but desolations,
The work of thine own days.

A nice parody of the genre, l.5 clearly pointing to a version of the formulaic *ἀντολίης δύσιός τε μεσημβρίας τε καὶ ἄρκτου* (discussed at p. 61) in the Greek original.

p. 214: For golden statues add *Année Épigr.* 1934, 159 (Taurus, cos. 391), L. Robert, *Op. Min. Sel.* iv (1974), 123–5, and in particular the several times repeated acclamation 'A golden statue for the prefect' from the acclamations against Ibas of Edessa (p. 240 above).

It may be added that several epigrams from the bases to statues of Porphyrius and his rivals are discussed in this book; notably *Anth. Plan.* 336 (pp. 48–50), 337 (pp. 50–52), *Anth. Pal.* xv. 50 and *Anth. Plan.* 347–50 (p. 107); see too pp. 28, 33, 107, 320, n. 9.

p. 245: On the connection between charioteers and magic, add Libanius, *or.* i. 161–2; xxxv. 13 and xxxvi. 15; and the anecdote in the *Life* of St. Leo of Catania (referring to the period 681–5) edited by V. Latysev, *Hagiographica Graeca Inedita* (*Mém. de l'Acad. Impér. des Sciences de St. Petersbourg* viii sér., xii. 2 (1914), 23 (a reference I owe to T. S. Brown).

Addenda

- p. 16: For some 8th and 9th century seals of demarchs, most (honorary) *protospatharii*, see G. Zacos and A. Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals* i. 2 (Basel 1972), 2017, 2257A, 2047, 2193.
- p. 24: M. J. Sjuzumov had already objected to the territorial demes in *Učenyje Zapiski Ural-skogo Gosud. Universiteta im. Gor'kogo* II (1952), 93–94, as A. P. Každan points out in *Voprosy istorii* 1975, 201–2.
- p. 74, n. 2: Add now G. Prinzing's more sceptical approach in *Studien zur Frühgeschichte Konstantinopels*, hrsg. v. H-G. Beck (*Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia* 14) München 1973, 27–48.
- p. 89: 'no evidence that the Pittakia was even a residential area.' P. Speck has now shown that it was probably no more than a square ('ein ziemlich kleiner, abgegrenzter Platz', *Ελληνικά* 1969, 430–5).
- p. 118, n. 3: John Haldon draws my attention to a 7th or 8th century seal (G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'emp. byz.* (1884), p. 144) mentioning a *νοῦμερον* [τ]ῶν *Βενίτων* ('cohorte des Vénètes')—a welcome trace of the postulated connection between the Blues and the *numeri*.
- p. 251: Procopius, *Anecd.* 29–36 implies that the Blues enjoyed free access to the palace as early as *ca.* 530, and the Greens protest at the lack of such access at about the same period (p. 320 with n. 7 above).

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I have not included a number of items cited in passing, nor have I duplicated everything in the separate bibliographies to App. A (p. 318 above) and *Porphyrius the Charioteer*.

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